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DUNGEON®

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Going Dark

By Christopher Perkins

In years past, when we found ourselves at the lonely crossroads between game editions, the magazines simply went from one edition to the next with nary a breath in between. This time is different. As we turn our attention to the next D&D® rules set, we're putting *Dragon*® and *Dungeon*® on hiatus.

The D&D magazines are going dark beginning in January. In other words, the December issues (#221 of *Dungeon* and #430 of *Dragon*) will be the last issues you see for a while. The magazines will continue on their present trajectories for the next few months, during which time we will answer questions such as the following: When will *Dragon* and *Dungeon* return, what form(s) will the magazines take, how much D&D content will the magazines publish, and how does one submit pitches for articles?

As it stands, we have all the 4th Edition content we need to fill the remaining issues between now and the end of the year, and we are not ready to solicit content for D&D Next. Consequently, we are not accepting articles or adventure pitches this fall, and the submission window (which normally opens on October 1st and closes on November 30th) will remain closed. Anyone who sends a pitch to **submissions@wizards.com** will receive an automated "Thanks, but no thanks" response, along with a short explanation of why we're not accepting content at this time.

Every new edition is a chance for the magazines to evolve, and evolve they will. If you are interested in contributing to the D&D tabletop roleplaying game in the future, my best advice (for the time being) is to start up a regular D&D Next game and familiarize yourself with the new rules. Hone your writing skills as best you can. Then wait to see what happens next.

Legacy of Ghere Thau

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 9-10

By David Noonan

Illustrations by Noah Bradley and Jason Juta

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

For centuries, the desert outpost of Ghere Thau has guarded a crossroads and oasis crucial to merchant caravans crossing the desert. Every generation, Ghere Thau changes hands as empires rise and fall, nobles gain and lose influence, and bandits grow more or less bold.

About a month ago, Ghere Thau was the site of a vicious battle when knights of Count Argramos, a regional lord, attacked Ghere Thau to defeat the necromancer Karlerren, who had dreams of empire. The knights overthrew Karlerren, but their victory was pyrrhic: only a dozen survived the battle. Too few to hold Ghere Thau, the knights said some hasty prayers over the bodies of their comrades, then retreated back to their stronghold.

Ghere Thau was too valuable to stay vacant for long, however. A band of cambion mercenaries seized the fortress and started repairing it. The merchant guilds that run caravans across the desert believe

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that the mercenaries intend to charge ruinous tolls or seize the caravans outright, so they've hired adventurers to drive the cambions away.

But no one—not the guilds, not the mercenaries, and not the adventurers—realizes that Karlerren's necromantic energy hasn't dissipated . . . and that the dead from the battles at Ghere Thau are eager to rise again.

Before running the adventure, you should anticipate ways that your characters can counter the undead that rise during each battle. Give yourself a refresher course on anti-undead powers such as Turn Undead, and consider ways that your characters can knock enemies unconscious or otherwise disable them without killing them. Clever players will realize that the encounters will be easier if they can prevent enemies from turning undead—and you're in a position to reward their cleverness.

Also, prepare for longer battles than usual, because the undead won't show up until the enemies start to take casualties. Powers that last for the duration of an encounter are more effective in this adventure (whether they're in player or monster hands). Once they begin to expect longer encounters, players might start to use their encounter powers more conservatively, pacing themselves to save "a little something special" for the soulmerged undead.

Background

As a 1,000-foot-tall rock promontory next to the only oasis for miles, Ghere Thau inevitably gained military value. For at least the last thousand years, Ghere Thau has guarded the oasis and monitored caravan traffic across the desert. On a clear day with little wind (and thus little dust), a sharp-eyed observer at Ghere Thau's summit can see more than a hundred miles in each direction.

Nerathi engineers dug the first tunnels into Ghere Thau's cliff face, expanding shallow caves that were already there. Both the cliff-fortress and the battlements that surround the oasis have been expanded, altered, and rebuilt dozens of times over the ensuing centuries.

Karlerren the necromancer seized Ghere Thau about two years ago, easily uprooting the understaffed garrison left by an elderly noble who preferred more hospitable climes. Karlerren set to creating an undead army: skeletons, zombies, and wights that could ignore the desert's dangers and threaten the civilized lands at the far end of the caravan routes. The merchant guilds responded by adding more armed guards, and then by diverting traffic through the desert while they petitioned local lords for assistance.

Count Argramos, whose own rule was propped up by mercantile interests, responded to the merchants' entreaties. Soon columns of his finest cavalry thundered across the desert to assault Ghere Thau.

The two-day battle was fierce, with neither side giving quarter. Immense catapult stones pelted Argramos's forces from high up on the cliffs, and Karlerren's forces fought tirelessly, animated by their master's necromantic energy.

By the afternoon of the second day, Argramos's knights reached Ghere Thau's interior and fought room by room, clearing out booby-traps and fighting Karlerren's magic. Fewer than twenty knights reached the upper levels of Ghere Thau. They slew Karlerren, who was in the middle of a necromantic ritual, but only twelve knights were standing by the end.

The remaining knights buried a few of their number, but the enormity of the battle carnage was beyond them, so they hastened back to Argramos. Word of Karlerren's demise reached Trask, a cambion mercenary captain. Vacant fortresses—even battle-damaged ones—are prizes too valuable to pass up, so Trask gathered his troops (mostly ogres and ettins led by members of Trask's extended family) and seized Ghere Thau about a month ago.

Trask's troops have extorted "tolls" from caravans who approach Ghere Thau, but mostly they have been occupied with repairing the damage that the fortress suffered in the battle between Karlerren and the knights of Argramos. The mercenaries are grumbling about being turned into "day laborers," but the promise of raiding outward from the desert's most entrenched fortress stokes their greed enough to stay on the job.

The mercenaries haven't done much to clean up the bodies left over from the battle. Because they haven't fought at Ghere Thau, they don't know that Karlerren's interrupted ritual trapped the souls of the fallen near the fortress. Those souls are eager to find a way back to the living world—even temporarily.

Synopsis

The adventure begins in earnest when the characters reach the outskirts of Ghere Thau, three days' travel from the nearest settlement. The desert crossroads is covered with soldier corpses and the wreckage of war.

Ghere Thau is far from deserted, however. The characters see that the cambion mercenaries and their underlings (a mix of ogres, humans, and others) have started to repair the fortress they now claim. The characters fight their way past the guards and construction crew and enter the bunkers embedded in the desert rock outcropping.

As they battle the mercenaries, the characters notice that some of enemies immediately rise as undead (often wights) when they fall. This poses a novel challenge for the players, who must try to control the pace of battle so they aren't overwhelmed by too many enemies at once. Even a lowly minion is a threat when it turns into a full-fledged wight after death. As the characters experience this phenomenon in each fight, they eventually learn which enemies are likely to turn into undead and which ones aren't. Characters who befriend (or interrogate) the more knowledgeable mercenaries learn the truth: the spirits of the dead soldiers lingered on the battlefield after

death, and they desperately merge with the recently slain, trying to return to life.

The characters can explore either the cavalry or infantry barracks first, but they must visit both to reach the officer quarters where the mercenary leader, Trask, schemes to control the entire desert from Ghere Thau. Reaching the upper chambers of Ghere Thau requires both a password and a key, a fact that the characters won't realize until they try to use only one or the other.

In the cavalry barracks, the characters confront the mercenaries' chaplain, see how the mercenaries are systematically looting the battlefield, and deal with some traps left over from the battle against the necromancer. In the infantry barracks, the characters have the chance to liberate some prisoners of war, disrupt the mercenaries' efforts to rebuild Ghere Thau, and clash against the cambions.

When the characters reach the upper parts of Ghere Thau, they face off against the mercenaries' leaders, sabotage Ghere Thau's magic-fueled siege weapons, and confront Trask—along with his pet earthquake dragon. When they defeat Trask, the characters' contract with the desert merchants is complete, with caravans free to travel past Ghere Thau in safety. For the time being, that is.

Rests

The mercenaries occupy four sections of Ghere Thau: the exterior, the cavalry barracks, the infantry barracks, and the officer quarters. (Ghere Thau used to be much larger, but tunnel collapses and other battle damage have limited the accessible parts of the fortress.)

The characters should be able to take an extended rest after clearing out each section. Trask's mercenaries are working hard on renovating the fortress, so there's plenty of construction noise (masking the sounds of battle elsewhere) and little reason for them to visit other parts of Ghere Thau.

The mercenaries are particularly distrustful of the long tunnels that connect the two barracks complexes and the officer quarters. The tunnels aren't actually unstable, but 500-foot, pitch-black tunnels under tons of rock in a badly damaged fortress don't exactly inspire confidence. Trask's mercenaries use almost any excuse not to use those tunnels.

Treasure

This adventure includes seven treasure parcels, plus the guild payment of 1,000 gp per character, which is worth three more parcels. The treasure is divided as follows.

Chapel (A4): Level 12 magic item, 5 *potions of healing*, 450 gp.

Temporary Hospital (B3): Level 11 magic item.

Officers' Quarters (U2): 650 gp.

Seer's Chamber (U3): Level 10 magic item, ritual books and scrolls worth 1,000 gp, and 400 gp.

Trask's Chamber (U5): Level 13 magic item, 3 statuettes worth 150 gp each.

Because this adventure has multiple monsters that can infect the characters with disease or petrify them, giving the characters access to ritual books such as Cure Disease and Remove Affliction is a good idea. The seer's chamber is a logical place for ritual books, and the chapel makes sense, too. Don't give them just those two rituals, though—that feels artificial.

Beyond those treasures, there is a surfeit of battle-damaged normal weapons and armor lying among the corpses outside Ghere Thau. Most of it requires repair to be returned to battle-worthiness, but if the characters are determined to obtain normal weapons and armor this way, it's certainly available.

Soulmerging

Karlerren's undead army and the knights of Argramos were bitter foes in battle, but after death the knights of Argramos have become undead—even if they don't realize it. The fading energy of Karlerren's desperate necromancy persists, preventing the souls of the fallen from moving on from Ghere Thau.

Those souls are invisible, intangible, and unreachable most of the time, and they aren't strong enough to spontaneously rise as undead such as wraiths or specters. But if someone else dies nearby, the trapped soul can combine with the recently deceased—a phenomenon that Zarudu, a foulspawn seer working with the mercenaries, calls "soulmerging."

The soulmerged spirit manifests as an undead (each encounter specifies what sort of undead rises) 1 round after the soulmerge occurs, and the creature is hostile to the characters. The power of the creature before it died doesn't matter; a lowly minion can become a challenging undead foe 1 round later.

After it rises from death, the soulmerged undead draws necromantic power from the trapped soul but retains the motivation and basic personality of the recently deceased. Thus the new undead attack the characters, not any former allies who are still living. (See the "If a Character Dies" sidebar for what might happen to a dead character.)

Zarudu (found in encounter A2) hasn't figured out why some deaths result in spontaneous undead creation, but others don't. He doesn't realize that the trapped souls (mostly knights of Argramos) were proud in life, and even after death merge only with Medium humanoids—creatures whose forms are familiar to them. The ettins, ogres, and more unusual members of Trask's mercenary company won't soulmerge after death.

Introducing the Undead: If the characters kill a Medium humanoid, describe the death but keep track of where the creature was in the initiative order. At that point in the next round's initiative, the undead creature specified for that encounter takes a move action to stand up and then acts normally.

If the characters start knocking enemies unconscious (as described on page 295 of the *Player's Handbook*), then the undead creatures still animate, but they're less effective because the existing soul is fighting the possession. The undead start combat with the dazed condition (save ends). Use different voices and dialogue to make it clear to the players that there's a struggle between the two souls—a struggle that ends when the creature makes its saving throw. At that point the soulmerge is complete and the undead functions normally.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins in earnest when the characters reach Ghere Thau. A preliminary conversation with the merchant guildmasters of Sark Alou should provide sufficient motivation for the characters to head into the desert.

Sark Alou

The city of Sark Alou sits on the edge of the desert wastes. Most of Sark Alou has its back to the desert—literally and figuratively—but a half-dozen merchant guilds run caravans past Ghere Thau to the other side of the desert. The characters meet their patrons here, then set off to evict Trask from the desert fortress.

When characters enter Sark Alou, read:
This bustling city has outgrown its walls, with shanties and huts stretching out for hundreds of yards beyond Sark Alou's gates. On your way here, you saw the vast grasslands—home to cattle ranches and cotton farms.

The letter you received directs you to the Weaver's Guildhall, somewhere in the caravan quarter on the far side of the city—where the walls hold back the sands of a slowly encroaching desert.

Any denizen of Sark Alou can direct the characters to the headquarters of the weaver's guild. When the characters arrive, servants usher them into a comfortable meeting room where Varren Seshak, guildmaster of the weaver's guild, explains that the city's guilds have pooled their resources to hire adventurers to clear out Ghere Thau. They're offering 1,000 gp per character.

This transaction can be relatively straightforward; there's no duplicity on the merchants' part. They just don't want to pay Trask's tolls or lose their merchandise.

Varren can share the following information:

- A mercenary from the far side of the desert named Trask leads about fifty troops, some of whom are ogres. Trask himself is supposedly a cambion.
- Ghere Thau is important because it's both a secure fortress and the best oasis for days in any direction.
- Ghere Thau is five days' travel from Sark Alou, and there's "nothing but sand" along the way.
- Ghere Thau was the site of major battle between a necromancer named Karlerren and the knights of Count Argramos. Argramos's knights defeated the undead army that was gathering there, but they didn't stay at Ghere Thau, so Trask arrived, "probably to loot the bodies of the fallen," and took over.
- The oasis has—"or had . . . who knows?"—stables and bunkhouses. The fortress of Ghere Thau features barracks and battlements at the base of a massive cliff. Two ramps lead up the cliff face to tunnels and underground barracks.
- The next caravan from Sark Alou is scheduled to leave in four days. After the characters are successful, they should remain at Ghere Thau until the caravan arrives. They'll be paid then and guards traveling with the caravan will secure Ghere Thau for the merchants.
- Varren doesn't want to negotiate on the total payment, but he's willing to part with some of the reward money in advance. He can recommend several "guild-approved" establishments if the characters need to buy supplies for the journey.

Quests

The player characters can earn additional XP awards for completing quests. In this case, the quest is simple.

MAJOR QUEST: SEIZE GHERE THAU
9th-Level Major Quest (500 XP/Character)
"Once Ghere Thau is in . . . 'responsible' hands, trade and prosperity can stretch across the desert."

The characters must clear out Ghere Thau and hold it until the caravan arrives (nine days after the adventure starts).

Getting to Ghere Thau

Let your players' dispositions determine how the journey to Ghere Thau goes. If your group is eager to get there, simply say, "After five days spent pouring sand out of your boots, you approach Ghere Thau from the northwest."

If your players enjoy planning the expedition for their characters, setting up watch, and the journey itself, use the following table to provide some encounters on the five-day journey to Ghere Thau. Roll once for every four hours traveling or eight hours in camp.

Desert Encounters

d%	Encounter
01-60	No encounter
61-70	Weather gets mildly worse (heat, wind)
71-80	Weather gets mildly better (cooler, cloudy)
81-84	1d3 basilisks
85-88	1d4 + 1 skinwing behemoths
89-91	1d3 spirehorn behemoths
92-94	1d3 bulettes
95-96	1d3 lamias
97-98	Purple worm
99-100	Sphinx

Ghere Thau

Trask's mercenaries are focused on repairing Ghere Thau's battle damage, so they aren't alert for travelers (especially small groups that don't kick up huge sand plumes like a caravan).

The crossroads at Ghere Thau contain everything characters might expect from a wrecked trade oasis. Stables, bunkhouses, and dozens of tents are present, but they've been burned, crushed, and trampled. Bodies—mostly humans, horses, and skeletons—lie everywhere. The characters can explore to their heart's content and establish a place to camp, but the crossroads are completely deserted.

The walls north of the crossroads have been breached in several places, and the barracks and fortifications between the walls and the base of the cliff have been wrecked even more thoroughly. At one point during the battle, Karlerren directed the magic siege engine at the top of Ghere Thau (encounter U4) to bombard his own fortifications in an attempt to dissuade the knights. The characters see plenty of catapult stones on the ground here, but no evidence of the siege engines that cast them.

The characters can explore the outer fortress as much as they wish, but it's deserted. To foreshadow the adventure's final encounter, give the characters

a glimpse of the earthquake dragon at some point before they head up the ramp.

When characters look up at the mountain, read:
Even several thousand feet in the air, the silhouette is unmistakable: A dragon is flying over Ghere Thau. It's hard to estimate size from this distance, and you can't make out the color. It lazily circles the mountain peak, then disappears behind the ridgeline.

The dragon is Aricanthros, an ally of Trask's that appears in encounter U5.

Approaching the Ramps

The oasis at the crossroads is nothing but wreckage and corpses, but the two ramps leading up to Ghere Thau are still mainly intact.

By day, characters can easily see a work crew—a few humans, perhaps a few giants—about halfway up the western ramp (encounter R1 below). Near the top of the eastern ramp are two elephant-sized creatures moving slowly back and forth (encounter R2 below). Only silhouettes are visible against the rock face of the mountain at this distance.

By night, both crews keep working by torchlight, which characters can see from the crossroads.

Neither work crew is likely to spot the characters because they're focused on their work, not on guarding the ramps.

Both ramps zigzag up the face of the mountain, so ascending characters lose sight of the work crews until they're 100 feet away. At that point the encounters begin normally.

R1. Excavation Crew

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)

Karlerren's forces trapped this ramp, triggering a landslide that buried the first soldiers to ascend. Now Trask's wizards-for-hire have summoned earth elementals to clear the ramp of debris.

Light: Bright (sunlight).

Monsters: 2 earth elementals, 2 human transmuters (which animate as shambling mummies when dropped to 0 hit points).

At the second switchback, read:
Two robed humans point with their staffs at two other humanoids composed entirely of the same gray stone as the mountain itself. Digging with their hands, the earth elementals paw at a landslide that has partially blocked the ramp.

This encounter is likely the first time the characters witness the soulmerging phenomenon, so play up the moment when each transmuter becomes a shambling mummy. It's otherwise a straightforward encounter.

Ramp: The ramp is 25 feet wide and bounded by the upslope and downslope. Behind the earth elementals is a landslide, and so far the elementals have cleared only a 10-foot-wide path past it.

Upslope: The upslope is a mix of scree and larger rocks. It takes an Athletics DC 12 check to ascend, and it's a 50-foot climb to the next switchback.

Downslope: Creatures forced off the edge of the ramp can make a saving throw to instead fall prone at the edge. If they fail, they tumble down a 50-foot rocky slope, taking 5d6 damage. Getting back up to the encounter is a 150-foot run on the ramp or a 50-foot climb (Athletics DC 12) up the slope.

Tactics: The transmuters use *capricious earth* to slide characters off the downslope whenever they can. The power is enemies-only, so the earth elementals aren't affected. If the characters avoid the downslope edge, one transmuter moves to the edge, then uses *hex jump* to trade places with a character, setting up a victim for the other transmuter's *capricious earth*. When the transmuters use *beast curse*, they choose to polymorph the characters into box turtles—and they think it's hilarious.

The earth elementals can also dump the characters off the ramp edge with *quake stomp*, but they aren't very bright and don't save their *quake stomps* for the perfect opportunity. They'll stomp as soon as they can hit at least two characters with it.

Development: Whenever a human transmuter dies, a shambling mummy rises in the same square at the initiative point where the transmuter would next act. The shambling mummy takes a move action to stand up, then attacks the nearest character. (See the "Roleplaying the Undead" sidebar.)

The shambling mummies charge and use *rotting grasp* as often as they can; make them seem as different as possible from the human transmuters they used to be.

2 Earth Elementals	**Level 11 Soldier**
Medium elemental magical beast (earth)	XP 600 each
HP 119; **Bloodied** 59	**Initiative** +5
AC 26, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22	**Perception** +5
Speed 7, burrow 7	Tremorsense 5
Vulnerable thunder (see *brittle skin*)	
Traits	
Earth Glide	
The earth elemental can pass through earth and rock as if it were phasing.	
Brittle Skin	
Whenever the earth elemental takes thunder damage, it takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of its next turn.	
Standard Actions	
Slam ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage, and the target cannot shift until the end of the elemental's next turn.	
Quake Stomp ✦ Recharge when first bloodied	
Attack: Close burst 4 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and the elemental slides the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.	
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 6 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+5)	
Con 23 (+11) **Int** 5 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial	

2 Human Transmuters	Level 7 Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300 each
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38	**Initiative** +3
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20	**Perception** +11
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
Staff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.	
Capricious Earth (charm, implement) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +10 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the transmuter slides the target up to 3 squares.	
Miss: The transmuter can slide the target 1 square.	
Beast Curse (implement, polymorph) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one hexed enemy); +10 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The transmuter alters the target's physical form to appear as a Tiny animal until the end of the transmuter's next turn. While in this form, the target cannot use powers or make attacks.	
Move Actions	
Hex Jump (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: Close burst 5 (one hexed creature in the burst). The transmuter and the target teleport, swapping positions.	
Minor Actions	
Hex (charm, implement) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst); +10 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is hexed until the end of the transmuter's next turn. While hexed, the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls against the transmuter.	
Skills Arcana +10, Nature +11	
Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 17 (+6)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 15 (+5) **Cha** 14 (+5)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment staff, robes	

2 Shambling Mummies	Level 8 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 350 each
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52	**Initiative** +3
AC 20, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 21	**Perception** +5
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison	
Traits	
Flammable Corpus	
Whenever the mummy takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Standard Actions	
Rotting Grasp (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the end of the mummy's next turn.	
Minor Actions	
Warding Curse (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). The target takes 5 necrotic damage whenever it attacks until the mummy uses this power again or until the end of the encounter.	
Str 19 (+8) **Dex** 8 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+5)	
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 6 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+7)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

R2. Wall Construction

Combat Encounter Level 11 (2,800 XP)

Trask plans to have his mercenaries repair a low rampart here, and beasts of burden are delivering the raw materials. If the characters haven't seen the soulmerge phenomenon in encounter R1, they'll see it for the first time here.

If the characters come up the eastern ramp, they'll be 100 feet away from the cambion at the start of the encounter. If the characters come up the western ramp, they'll be 300 feet away.

Light: Bright (sunlight).

Monsters: 2 spirehorn behemoths, 1 quasit, 1 chained cambion (which animates as a battle wight when dropped to 0 hit points).

ROLEPLAYING THE UNDEAD

"Legacy at Ghere Thau" comes alive as you portray both parts of a soulmerged undead when it rises. Each one has the memories and motivation of the creature that just died, but it's fueled by the necromantic power of a restless spirit—a fallen knight of Argramos.

When an undead creature arises, show the confusion and conflict that derives from two personalities inhabiting a body that shouldn't be alive in the first place. A soulmerged undead might say:

- ✦ "This body will suffice, for now."
- ✦ "Oh, no—what have I become?"
- ✦ "For Argramos! Wait—no . . ."
- ✦ "I live . . . but why? *Why?*"
- ✦ "Slay the undead! No! Slay the invaders!"
- ✦ "Why do I fight . . . I can't remember . . ."

Clever players might knock enemies unconscious, in which case the soulmerged undead that rises will be even more confused (dazed, save ends).

When a soulmerged undead dies for the second time, portray a knight glad to be released:

- ✦ "I'm free! Free of this undead horror!"
- ✦ "Tell Lord Argramos we tried . . ."
- ✦ "Even now, the necromancer cannot win."
- ✦ "Oblivion is better than this . . ."
- ✦ "I'm free! Free of this cursed existence!"
- ✦ "I fight because I must . . ."

Characters can converse with the soulmerged undead, but such conversations will be brief. The undead are hostile (at least the freshly dead souls within them) and motivated to wreak revenge on their slayers.

2 Spirehorn Behemoths	Level 9 Elite Brute
Huge natural beast (mount, reptile)	XP 800 each
HP 234; **Bloodied** 117	**Initiative** +6
AC 21, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21	**Perception** +7
Speed 6	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Beastmaster (mount)	
While the behemoth has a friendly rider of 9th level or higher mounted on it, the rider gains a +1 bonus to AC and Reflex.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Gore** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The spirehorn uses *gore* twice.	
⸸ **Trample** ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The spirehorn shifts twice its speed and can enter enemies' spaces during the move. Each time the spirehorn enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, it can use *gore* against that enemy.	
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+7)	
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 4 (+1) **Cha** 9 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

When characters reach the top of the ramp, read:
A devilish creature surrounded by floating chains whips the nearer of two behemoths. Each behemoth has a wooden platform roped to its back with bricks stacked high. A smaller demonic humanoid flits over the devil's head.

This encounter is another straightforward battle to establish the strangeness of the soulmerged undead. In this combat, a cambion that turns into a wight demonstrates the variety of soulmerged undead.

Between the bricks and the cambion's aura, this encounter contains a lot of difficult terrain for the characters.

Bricks: During the first turn after a behemoth takes damage, it spends a move action to rise onto its hind legs. This spills the bricks on its back, which hit all adjacent squares with a +13 attack against

Quasit	Level 7 Controller
Tiny elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 300
HP 75; **Bloodied** 37	**Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19	**Perception** +10
Speed 8	Darkvision
Traits	
☼ **Tempter's Influence** ✦ **Aura** 2	
Enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to saving throws.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 0 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
⇜ **Evil Temptation** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Close burst 3 (one creature in the burst); +10 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends). The effect also ends if the target makes an attack against one of its allies.	
Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Effect: The quasit becomes invisible until it makes an attack roll.	
Triggered Actions	
Variable Resistance ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The quasit takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.	
Effect (Free Action): The quasit gains resist 10 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.	
Skills Arcana +8, Bluff +11, Stealth +13	
Str 8 (+2) **Dex** 21 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+5)	
Con 11 (+3) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	

Fortitude for 2d8 damage. Those squares remain difficult terrain for the rest of the battle.

Crumbling Rampart: The wall on the outer edge of the ramp is badly damaged and varies from 1 to 3 feet tall. It provides a +2 bonus to saving throws to avoid being thrown off the ramp.

Cliff: Below the ramp is a 50-foot cliff that drops into a gully. It's a DC 17 Athletics check to climb back up.

Tactics: The first turn for a behemoth starts as described under "Bricks" above. Behemoths are slowed until they get rid of the bricks on their backs.

Chained Cambion	Level 10 Controller
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 500
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55	**Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 24	**Perception** +9
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 10 fire	
Traits	
☼ **Binding Field** ✦ **Aura** 3	
Squares within the aura are difficult terrain for enemies.	
Child of Chains	
While immobilized or restrained, the chained cambion gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and gains a +2 bonus to attempts to escape a grab and to saving throws against effects that immobilize or restrain.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Chain Lash** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 8 damage, and a dazed target is immobilized (save ends).	
⸸ **Vile Fetters** (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +13 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 psychic damage, and if the target ends its next turn closer to the chained cambion, it is dazed (save ends).	
⇜ **Unfettered Scream** (psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the chained cambion pushes the target 2 squares. The target is also dazed (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
Mind Shackles (psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: Two enemies adjacent to each other in a close burst 5 are psychically shackled (save ends; each enemy makes a separate saving throw against this effect). While psychically shackled, an enemy takes 10 psychic damage at the start and the end of its turn if it isn't adjacent to the other creature that was affected by this power.	
Aftereffect: The effect persists, and the damage decreases to 5 (save ends).	
Str 17 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 19 (+9)	
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal	

The cambion doesn't really care about the behemoths—he'll use *chain lash* or *unfettered scream* to

Battle Wight	Level 9 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 400
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49	**Initiative** +7
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 22	**Perception** +3
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Soul-Draining Longsword** (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.	
Soul Reaping (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one immobilized creature); +12 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d8 + 9 necrotic damage, and the wight regains 10 hit points.	
Skills Intimidate +14	
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+3)	
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword	

damage a behemoth and make it dump its load of bricks. *Unfettered scream* is also an excellent way to knock characters off the cliff.

The quasit turns invisible and uses its aura to hinder saving throws until the cambion is bloodied. Then it starts fighting with *evil temptation* and its *bite* attack. When the quasit is bloodied, it flies upward toward area U5 and tries to warn Trask.

Development: A battle wight replaces the chained cambion when it falls. Any chains from the cambion disappear immediately.

The battle wight attempts to soul-drain whoever is nearest; ignore the longsword in the stat block and treat it as any other melee attack.

Entering Ghere Thau

Both ramps ascend to reach a broad platform and a 30-foot-wide tunnel entrance. Granite feet and piles of rubble mark where there were once statues at either side of the entrance. Trask's mercenaries are busy repairing Ghere Thau's battle damage, so they haven't set up a watch at the entrance.

The 20-foot-wide tunnel splits in two almost immediately. One tunnel heads northeast to the cavalry stables (level A). The other heads northwest to the infantry barracks (level B).

About 200 vertical feet above the tunnel are two smaller entrances (areas U4 and U5). They're difficult to spot unless you know what you're looking for (DC 25 Perception, and make the check only if a character specifically scans the cliffs above the tunnel entrance). The scree is particularly slippery, so it's a DC 25 Athletics check to climb up to those openings.

A1. Stables

Combat Encounter Level 11 (2,750 XP)

A mercenary work crew (ogres and their dragonborn minders) is killing time here after a shift working elsewhere on fortress repairs.

Perception DC 12: The southern stable smells like horse dung, but also contains the scent of smoke, which gets stronger as you go north.

Light: Bright (wall torches) in northern stable. Dark in southern stable.

Monsters: 2 dragonborn mercenaries (which animate as battle wights when dropped to 0 hit points), 5 ogre steading warriors.

At the southern entrance to the stables, read:
These cavernous chambers have wooden stables constructed in the eastern end, as if someone had built an underground barn. The walls are festooned with iron hooks and pegs. A wide doorway connects to a northern chamber, where two ogres and two dragonborn have their backs to you. They seem to be throwing rocks at something on the far northern wall.

IF A CHARACTER DIES

Most characters are Medium humanoids and thus are vulnerable to soulmerging if they die. If a character dies and a Raise Dead ritual isn't available, ask the player whether continuing as a friendly undead is an interesting direction for the character.

If the player is amenable, provide access to the revenant, published in *Heroes of Shadow* and *Dragon* #375. It should take a player only a few moments to subtract out the old racial benefits and add the revenant's benefits (retaining the old race as the "past life" of the revenant).

Turning a character into a revenant—voluntarily!—bends the "rules" of the soulmerged undead, but it does so for a good cause. You can justify it by saying that the character's uncommon willpower channeled Karlerren's necromantic energy into reanimation without involving any of the knights' spirits. That character now has a vested interest in understanding Karlerren's magic, which might motivate future adventures.

Ask the players about their characters' light sources when they reach this point. If the characters douse their lights right away, they can observe the mercenaries without being seen. If they watch for a few minutes, they'll hear (but not see) one of the other three ogres yelling "Keep it down over there!" from their bedrolls.

The ogres are trying to hit some human skulls hanging from pegs on the north wall between the two northern exits. If the characters watch them for a bit, they'll learn two things: The ogres have terrible aim, and the dragonborn are betting on them—but betting on which ogre has the worst aim.

Level B: Barracks
B4
B5
B3
B2
B1
To level A and long staircase
To main entrance ramps
N
Level A: Armory and Cavalry
A4
A2
A3
A1
To level B and long staircase
To main entrance ramps
=10 feet

2 Dragonborn Mercenaries	Level 11 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 600 each
HP 111; **Bloodied** 55	**Initiative** +8
AC 27, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23	**Perception** +9
Speed 6	
Traits	
Phalanx Formation	
The mercenary gains a +1 power bonus to AC for each ally adjacent to it, up to a maximum power bonus of +4.	
Standard Actions	
Longsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC, or +18 vs. AC while the vanguard is bloodied	
Hit: 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the mercenary's next turn.	
Minor Actions	
Shield Bash (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature marked by the mercenary); +16 vs. AC, or +18 vs. AC while the mercenary is bloodied	
Hit: The target is dazed until the end of the mercenary's next turn.	
Vanguard's Mark ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst). The target is marked until the end of the mercenary's next turn. If the target doesn't end its next turn adjacent to the mercenary, the mercenary can immediately charge the target as a free action and doesn't provoke opportunity attacks for the charge's movement.	
Dragon Breath (poison) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +14 vs. Reflex, or +16 vs. Reflex while the mercenary is bloodied	
Hit: 1d6 + 6 poison damage.	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 18 (+9)	
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+7)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Draconic	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword	

Southern Stables: These stables are intact. There's enough room for about eighty horses and two small forges (now cold) for horseshoeing. A storage area to the east contains bales of hay stacked against the northern wall and barrels of water (sealed and still drinkable) against the southern wall.

Northern Stables: A fire burned through here when the knights of Argramos attacked. Only a few burned wooden walls and the forges remain. No dead horses, though—they were long gone before the knights reached this point. Three ogres are lying on bedrolls here. They're trying to sleep, but the racket from the rock-throwing is keeping them up.

5 Ogre Steading Warriors	Level 11 Minion Soldier
Large natural humanoid (giant)	XP 150 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	**Initiative** +7
AC 27, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22	**Perception** +5
Speed 8	
Traits	
Threatening Reach	
The ogre can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 2 squares of it.	
Standard Actions	
Battleaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 9 damage.	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 11 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+5)	
Con 21 (+10) **Int** 4 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+3)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment battleaxe, hide armor	

Tactics: The dragonborn are careful with their *dragon breath;* they'll spread out to avoid each other and the ogres.

The ogres are minions. Use their reach from behind the stable walls when you can and generally play up their stupidity.

Development: A battle wight arises whenever a dragonborn dies; use the same space and the dragonborn's spot in the initiative order. It takes the battle wight a move action to rise to its feet. Use the dragonborn's equipment (longsword, plate armor, and shield); it's not worth changing the battle wight's stat block to account for minor equipment differences.

2 Battle Wights	Level 9 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 400 each
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49	**Initiative** +7
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 22	**Perception** +3
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Standard Actions	
Soul-Draining Longsword (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.	
Soul Reaping (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one immobilized creature); +12 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d8 + 9 necrotic damage, and the wight regains 10 hit points.	
Skills Intimidate +14	
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+3)	
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword	

A2. Zarudu's Morgue

Combat Encounter Level 9 (1,950 XP)

One of Trask's brighter underlings is trying to figure out why the dead return to life in Ghere Thau.

Light: Dim (glow from the furnace).

Monsters: 1 foulspawn seer, 1 foulspawn mangler. (When dropped to 0 hit points, these foulspawn animate as vampire night witches.)

When characters reach the area, read:

Three large furnaces on the western wall light this room with a red glow. On the worktables are cadavers and skeletons: at least two human and one ogre. A four-armed humanoid squats on one of the tables, then scampers down when a voice from beyond your view says something in a harsh tone.

If a character understands Deep Speech, add:
The voice said, "Get down! Don't disturb my work!"

This encounter probably starts as a combat encounter, but be alert for the opportunity for it to become a role-playing encounter as the characters realize Zarudu might have information they want.

Lore: The foulspawn seer, Zarudu, is the only one of Trask's mercenaries who knows about the soul-merging phenomenon. It has happened twice within Zarudu's sight—once here and once in area B2—and Zarudu is trying to figure out what's happening.

Furnace: Before Zarudu turned it into a morgue, this was the blacksmith's shop. The furnaces are being used only to provide heat and light, but their surfaces are still hot. If a creature is pushed against a furnace (meaning forced movement that would take the creature into the next square, if the furnace weren't there), it takes 2d8 fire damage.

Cadavers: There's one human corpse (a knight of Argramos), a human skeleton (one of Karlerren's minions), and a dead ogre (one of Trask's) on the table. All three have been partially dismantled or cut open. A DC 25 Heal check reveals that the human died of multiple stab wounds and the ogre died of a skull-shattering blow to the head (a construction accident).

Eastern Rooms: The storage chambers east of the workshop are empty of all but splinters. Whatever was in here has already been looted. Both doors have rusty but serviceable padlocks that currently hang open on the hasp (Thievery DC 17 to unlock them if someone clicks them shut).

Tactics: Zarudu the foulspawn seer avoids melee if at all possible, using both his inherent teleport and the *bend space* interrupt. Use the *distortion blast* as soon as possible; Zarudu doesn't mind hitting the mangler with it, too. He targets unbloodied characters whenever he has a choice.

Unlike the rest of Trask's mercenaries, Zarudu attacks a soulmerged undead. His research has stoked a hatred for the undead and a fear that he might become one himself.

The foulspawn mangler targets dazed characters, risking opportunity attacks to get to them.

Development: When either foulspawn dies, a vampire night witch rises in the same square in the foulspawn's next initiative point. It spends its first move action standing up. The vampires' favorite trick is to use *claw* to slide an enemy against the furnace, dealing extra damage. They use *vanish into shadow* but only to gain a momentary advantage. They won't stop fighting until they're dead or all the characters are.

Foulspawn Seer **Level 11 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium aberrant humanoid XP 600

HP 86; **Bloodied** 43 **Initiative** +7
AC 25, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23 **Perception** +9
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Traits

☼ **Foul Insight** ✦ **Aura** 10
Any ally in the aura that can hear the seer gains a +2 power bonus to one attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw on its turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Twisted Staff** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 10 damage, and the seer can push the target 1 square.

Warp Orb (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +16 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target is already slowed, it is instead dazed (save ends).

Distortion Blast ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + 8 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). If the target is aberrant, the damage is halved.

Move Actions

Teleport (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The seer teleports up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Bend Space (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Trigger: An attack hits the seer.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The seer teleports up to 3 squares.

Str 10 (+5)	**Dex** 14 (+7)	**Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 14 (+7)	**Int** 22 (+11)	**Cha** 18 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 10
Equipment staff implement

Foulspawn Mangler **Level 8 Skirmisher**
Medium aberrant humanoid XP 350

HP 86; **Bloodied** 43 **Initiative** +9
AC 22 (24 while bloodied), **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20 (22 while bloodied), **Will** 22 **Perception** +7
Low-light vision
Speed 7 (9 while bloodied)

Traits

Combat Advantage
The mangler deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Mangler's Mobility
The mangler gains a +5 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by movement.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 7 damage.

Thrown Daggers (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one or two creatures); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage.

Dagger Dance ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The mangler uses *dagger* four times and can shift 1 square after each attack.

Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +12

Str 13 (+5)	**Dex** 17 (+7)	**Wis** 6 (+2)
Con 14 (+6)	**Int** 10 (+4)	**Cha** 14 (+6)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 10
Equipment 8 daggers

2 Vampire Night Witches	Level 10 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 500 each
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49	**Initiative** +9
AC 24, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24	**Perception** +12
Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Traits	
Burned by Sunlight (radiant)	
Whenever the vampire starts its turn in direct sunlight, it takes 5 radiant damage.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 4 damage.	
Effect: The vampire slides the target up to 3 squares.	
⸸ **Bite** (healing) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one dazed, dominated, stunned, or unconscious creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 10 damage, and the vampire regains 15 hit points.	
⚹ **Dream Lure** (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +13 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.	
Effect: The vampire pulls the target up to 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Vanish into Shadow (illusion) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The vampire takes damage while bloodied.	
Effect (No Action): The vampire becomes invisible until the end of the encounter or until it attacks.	
Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +13, Bluff +16, Insight +12, Stealth +14	
Str 17 (+8) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+7)	
Con 10 (+5) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 22 (+11)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	

A3. Cloudkill Area

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,600 XP)

Poisonous gas left over from a trap Karlerren sprang on the knights of Argramos fills the northeastern part of the cavalry complex, so Trask stationed guards here to make sure none of his more dim-witted troops wander in and poison themselves.

Perception DC 12: A body of a human in plate armor lies sprawled on the ground about 10 feet north of the northern doorway.

Perception DC 17: The green mist of the poison gas can faintly be seen beyond the northern doorway.

Arcana DC 25: The character senses the presence of the magic barrier at the doorway that keeps the poison gas from spreading southward.

Light: Bright (wall torches).

Monsters: 1 cambion wrathborn (which animates as a battle wight when dropped to 0 hit points), 3 rage devils.

When characters reach the area, read:

Two immense devils, each with a fearsome maul, stand guard on either side of a doorway in the north wall. The floor is littered with bones but is otherwise empty. A set of doors in the eastern wall is open, and you can hear something rummaging around beyond the doors.

The rage devils are dangerous brutes, but the real threat is the poison gas beyond an invisible barrier at the threshold of the northern doorway.

The characters can't initially see the cambion wrathborn and one of the rage devils; they're in the side chamber to the east and arrive in round 2.

Barrier: The ward that keeps the gas from entering this room is invisible, and it stops only the gas.

TALKING TO ZARUDU

Zarudu doesn't like armed intruders any more than anyone else, but the soulmerge phenomenon worries him more than rival mercenaries (which he assumes the characters are). As soon as a character or foulspawn is bloodied in the fight, the characters hear Zarudu's voice in their minds: "Don't kill! An undead will rise!" (The mangler ignores this, but the characters cannot.) Zarudu repeats this message aloud in Deep Speech.

Zarudu is willing to stop fighting and parley if the characters offer and Zarudu doesn't think it's a ruse (Zarudu's Insight check is +4).

Zarudu tells what he knows if he's convinced the characters also hate the undead (Diplomacy or Bluff DC 14) and that they have a grounding in the academic knowledge required to end it (Religion or Bluff DC 17).

Zarudu knows the following:

- ✦ The undead are rising because the souls of the knights weren't buried properly and seek new bodies (somewhat true; Karlerren's necromancy is another major factor). Zarudu calls the process "soulmerging."
- ✦ The souls seem to be somewhat picky about the bodies they claim. They won't inhabit an ogre or an animal (somewhat true; they inhabit only Medium humanoids).
- ✦ The undead keep the motivations and personality they had in life . . . at first. After about an hour, they start to talk more like knights of Argramos for brief moments, then descend into unintelligible madness.
- ✦ Some undead seem wight-like, while others are more like mummies, and Zarudu can't figure out why. Unless he sees a vampire rise in this room, Zarudu doesn't know that's possible.

Zarudu won't travel with the characters or reveal what lies in rooms beyond ("I'm no traitor!"). He'll agree to leave Ghere Thau or be locked in one of the small rooms to the east.

Cambion Wrathborn	**Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 400
HP 100; **Bloodied** 50	**Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 18	**Perception** +6
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)	Darkvision
Resist 10 fire	

Traits

Burning Anger (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
While the wrathborn is bloodied, any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage.

Standard Actions

Pain Blade (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the wrathborn's next turn.

Path of Pain (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wrathborn shifts 4 squares and uses *pain blade* at any point during the shift.

Fire Bolt (fire, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 5 fire damage.

Burst Skyward (fire, implement) ✦ **Encounter**
Requirement: The wrathborn must be bloodied.
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and the wrathborn flies 8 squares without provoking opportunity attacks.

Minor Actions

Wicked Guise (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wrathborn must not be bloodied.
Effect: The wrathborn assumes the appearance of a specific Medium humanoid.

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Intimidate +14

Str 17 (+7)	**Dex** 21 (+9)	**Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9)	**Int** 15 (+6)	**Cha** 20 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal
Equipment leather armor, short sword, wand

Characters who step (or are pushed) beyond it feel a tingle from the barrier's magic—and then the gas sets in.

Cloudkill: A creature that starts its turn north of the doorway takes 4d10 poison damage.

Human Corpse: This is a knight of Argramos who succumbed to the poison. Her head is pointing toward the doorway; she was running out and fell forward when she died.

3 Rage Devils	**Level 11 Brute**
Large immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 600 each
HP 138; **Bloodied** 69	**Initiative** +7
AC 23, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23	**Perception** +9
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 20 fire	

Traits

Blood Rage
The rage devil deals 2d6 extra damage against bloodied enemies.

Standard Actions

Disrupting Maul (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 5 damage, and the target loses all resistances until the end of its next turn.

Maul Storm (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 1d12 + 5 damage, and the devil pushes the target 3 squares. If the target is bloodied after this attack, it falls prone.

Demonscourge Crush (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + 5 damage, and the target is weakened and loses all resistances (save ends both).

Skills Athletics +15, Endurance +14

Str 21 (+10)	**Dex** 15 (+7)	**Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 18 (+9)	**Int** 9 (+4)	**Cha** 11 (+5)

Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal
Equipment maul

Eastern Rooms: These rooms were ordinary storage for the cavalry. Now they're a mess, with tent canvas, extra tack, iron rations, and other mundane supplies scattered across the floor. The easternmost room is unusually cold. A DC 12 Arcana check reveals that the room is magically chilled to serve as a refrigerated larder.

Northern Rooms: The three large rooms are ordinary barracks with bunk beds and little else. The smaller rooms are offices for the cavalry commanders. They have area maps on the walls and moldering paperwork from bygone campaigns. All these rooms are flooded with the cloudkill poison, which reaches all the way to the top of the stairway leading west.

Battle Wight	**Level 9 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 400
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49	**Initiative** +7
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 22	**Perception** +3
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	

Standard Actions

Soul-Draining Longsword (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Soul Reaping (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚃
Attack: Ranged 5 (one immobilized creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + 9 necrotic damage, and the wight regains 10 hit points.

Skills Intimidate +14

Str 20 (+9)	**Dex** 13 (+5)	**Wis** 9 (+3)
Con 18 (+8)	**Int** 12 (+5)	**Cha** 20 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword

Tactics: The rage devils fight like the brutes they are, but they know one good trick: using *maul storm* to push the characters through the barrier and into the gas.

The cambion flits around, trying to keep out of reach and gain advantageous position against enemies.

Development: When the cambion dies, it becomes a battle wight. The battle wight is immune to poison, so it can stand north of the doorway.

A4. Chapel

Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,300 XP)

Over Ghere Thau's history, this chapel has served the worshipers of many gods. At present, Trask's followers are destroying all the Vecna-related icons that belonged to Karlerren.

Perception DC 25: The flames in the braziers aren't moving naturally. (Fire elementals hide within the flames.)

Light: Bright (altar braziers).

Monsters: 1 ogre storm shaman, 1 ogre juggernaut, 2 fire elementals. (When an ogre dies, 4 lingering warrior spirits appear over its corpse, but they do not fight unless provoked, so they are not included in the XP total.)

When characters reach the area, read:

With pews facing a wooden altar, this is obviously a chapel or temple of some kind. An ogre smashes at what was once a stone statue near the altar, while another ogre with a blackened staff tears at a tapestry on the northern wall.

This battle is all about the property damage, with thunder, lightning, fire, and rain all appearing in a fairly small chamber.

Pews: The pews are here to take damage. If the ogre uses *juggernaut push* to plow through the pews, its path leaves splintered wreckage (difficult terrain) behind it. If an elemental's *seething fire* hits a square with a pew in it (wrecked or not), that square is on fire for the rest of the encounter, dealing 1d6 fire damage to any creature that enters it or starts a turn there.

Altar: The altar had a statue of Vecna on it before the ogre juggernaut got there. Now it lies in pieces in front of the altar, and the juggernaut is still hitting it with a greatclub. A successful DC 17 Intelligence check during a short rest enables a character to figure out that the statue depicted a robed skeleton.

Braziers: Within each brazier is a fire elemental bound to protect the storm shaman. The braziers provide light normally even after the fire elementals depart.

Tapestries: The tapestries on the walls have an interlocking pattern of skulls and question marks. They're in bad shape and worth only 50 gp each. A

Ogre Storm Shaman — **Level 11 Controller**
Large natural humanoid — XP 600

HP 114; **Bloodied** 57 — **Initiative** +8
AC 25, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22 — **Perception** +8
Speed 8

Standard Actions

⊕ **Thunder Staff** (thunder, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 9 thunder damage. A blinded or deafened target is also dazed (save ends).

Thunder Blast (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 6 thunder damage, and the target is deafened (save ends).

Call Lightning (lightning) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Minor Actions

Drenching Rain ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The storm shaman creates a zone in an area burst 3 within 10 squares that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the storm shaman uses this power again. Any enemy within the zone takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -2 penalty to all defenses.

Str 23 (+11)	**Dex** 16 (+8)	**Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 18 (+9)	**Int** 12 (+6)	**Cha** 11 (+5)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment hide armor, staff

Ogre Juggernaut — **Level 10 Brute**
Large natural humanoid (giant) — XP 500

HP 131; **Bloodied** 65 — **Initiative** +7
AC 22, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20 — **Perception** +7
Speed 8

Standard Actions

⊕ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 4d8 + 5 damage.

Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage.

Juggernaut Push ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The ogre pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone. The ogre then shifts 1 square to the square the target vacated. The ogre can push the target an additional number of squares equal to the ogre's speed, shifting an equal number of squares and remaining adjacent to it. The target takes 1d8 damage for each additional square the ogre pushes it.

Str 24 (+12)	**Dex** 15 (+7)	**Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 21 (+10)	**Int** 4 (+2)	**Cha** 6 (+3)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 4 rocks

2 Fire Elementals — **Level 11 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (fire) — XP 600 each

HP 107; **Bloodied** 53 — **Initiative** +14
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 — **Perception** +6
Speed 10, fly 6 (clumsy)
Vulnerable cold (see *frozen in place*)

Traits

Frozen in Place
Whenever the fire elemental takes cold damage, it cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: Ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Minor Actions

Flickering Flame ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The elemental shifts 2 squares.

Triggered Actions

Seething Fire (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An attack hits the elemental.
Effect (Free Action): Each enemy adjacent to the elemental takes 5 fire damage.

Str 10 (+5)	**Dex** 24 (+12)	**Wis** 13 (+6)
Con 11 (+5)	**Int** 5 (+2)	**Cha** 6 (+3)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial

4 Lingering Warrior Spirits Level 7 Minion Soldier	
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +8	
AC 23, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, fear; **Resist** 15 all except radiant	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Phantom Strike** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 6 damage, and the target is immobilized until the start of the spirit's next turn.	
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

DC 12 Religion check is sufficient to identify them as Vecna-inspired.

Antechambers: The small rooms to either side of the altar were offices and living quarters for the priests of whichever faith held sway in Ghere Thau. Both are locked (Thievery DC 17). Beyond the doors are desks, simple bedrolls, and treasure (see below).

If the characters have no recourse for mummy rot, you can include a Cure Disease ritual among the papers here. A Remove Affliction ritual might also be useful if characters have no recourse against monsters with petrification (see encounter U1).

Southeastern Passageway: These doors are locked (Thievery DC 17) to keep Trask's soldiers from wandering into the poison gas. The gas is heavier than air and reaches to the top step of the westernmost stairs (Perceptions DC 17 to spot it).

Tactics: The storm shaman behaves like an actual storm: first *call lightning*, then *thunder blast*, then *thunder staff* in an attempt to daze someone.

The fire elementals leap out of the braziers when combat starts, then shift around to maximize the effectiveness of their *seething fire*. They avoid the area of the shaman's *drenching rain*, just because they hate water (it doesn't damage them).

The ogre juggernaut isn't throwing rocks—it's throwing stone skulls that once decorated the walls. Same damage, though.

Development: None of the monsters in this encounter become undead. When either of the ogres falls, four lingering warrior spirits appear and hover over the body. They look like human knights, and their faces are sad when they examine the corpse. You can have them fight if you wish, but they aren't here to add to the challenge. They're here to provide another clue to the soulmerge phenomenon.

The storm shaman knows the password for the long staircase: "Krelunithawn."

Treasure: Two treasure parcels are here—the northern antechamber has a level 12 magic item, and the southern antechamber has five *potions of healing* and 450 gp. Around the storm shaman's neck is a key that opens the door to the long staircase.

B1. Tunneling Crew

Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP)

This crew is digging out a tunnel that collapsed during the battle between the knights of Argramos and Karlerren. They don't know where it leads, but they're hoping an intact part of the fortress lies beyond the rubble.

Perception DC 26 or Dungeoneering DC 21: The bracing on the south wall and ceiling is precarious and could give way at any moment.

Light: Bright (bonfire in northwest corner).

Monsters: 2 bone crown behemoths, 1 ettin marauder, 1 ettin hunter. (When an ettin dies, 4 lingering warrior spirits appear over its corpse, but they do not fight unless provoked, so they are not included in the XP total.)

TALKING TO THE WARRIOR SPIRITS

The lingering warrior spirits that appear in encounters A4, B1, and U3 don't interact much with the characters. They care only about finding new bodies or passing to their final destination in the afterlife. Characters can interact with them by fighting them if they wish, but they can also have a brief conversation if they catch the spirits' attention.

A character who succeeds at a DC 17 Religion check knows a prayer for the dead favored by the knights of Argramos. A DC 17 History check is sufficient to recite the oath every new knight must learn before swearing fealty to Argramos.

Reciting either the prayer or the oath causes the lingering warrior spirits to turn toward the reciter. One spirit takes a step forward and says: "I am Sir Jannek of Argramos. We must live again . . . fight again!"

The spirits linger only long enough to utter a few sentences. After they see that there's no suitable body, they fade away.

Here are some things the spirits might say:

- ✦ "We must return to life! Only the battle matters!"
- ✦ "Did we defeat the necromancer? I want to care . . . but I can't make myself care."
- ✦ "I am a knight of Argramos. I will not return to a lesser form."

Are the knights now evil? It's hard to say. They seem confused, but determined to inhabit new bodies—no matter what the cost.

2 Bone Crown Behemoths	Level 6 Soldier
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)	XP 250 each
HP 71; **Bloodied** 35	**Initiative** +7
AC 22, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17	**Perception** +4
Speed 7	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Head Butt** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the bone crown's next turn. When charging, the bone crown also pushes the target 1 square.	
Special: Whenever the bone crown hits a creature with an opportunity attack, that creature falls prone.	
Triggered Actions	
↯ **Threatening Bash** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy marked by the bone crown shifts.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The bone crown uses *head butt* against the triggering enemy.	
Insult to Injury (mount) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The bone crown has a friendly rider of 6th level or higher mounted on it, and the rider hits with a charge attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The bone crown pushes the target of the charge 1 square.	
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

When characters reach the area, read:

This chamber has the finished stone typical of Ghere Thau in the northern end, but a series of cave-ins has obliterated whatever was once in the south end. Two behemoths push rubble across the floor with shovel-like apparatuses yoked to their necks. An ettin seems to be talking to itself as it observes the behemoths.

This combat gives characters a taste of their own medicine: three of the four monsters can mark targets like a defender can. Keep close track of who's marking whom.

If the characters take time to listen to the ettin, the two heads are speculating in the Giant language about whether the tunnel will lead back outside or to a different part of the fortress.

Ettin Marauder	Level 10 Elite Soldier
Large natural humanoid (giant)	XP 1,000
HP 222; **Bloodied** 111	**Initiative** +8
AC 26, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20	**Perception** +12
Speed 6	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Double Actions	
The ettin makes two initiative checks and takes a full turn on each initiative result. The ettin can take two immediate actions per round but only one between one turn and the next.	
Dual Brain	
At the end of each of its turns, the ettin automatically ends any dazing, stunning, or charm effect on itself.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Smash** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 12 damage, and the ettin can push the target 1 square.	
Effect: The ettin marks the target until the end of the ettin's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
↯ **Swat** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy enters a square where it flanks the ettin.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (one creature flanking the ettin); +13 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The ettin pushes the target up to 3 squares.	
Str 28 (+14) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)	
Con 23 (+11) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+4)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant	

Bonfire: A creature pushed into this square takes 2d8 fire damage each turn it starts in this square.

South Wall: A creature forced against the wall with a slide or push that had at least one more square of available movement triggers a cave-in as described on page 91 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, except that the skill DCs are all 5 lower.

Tactics: The bone crown behemoths are smart enough to mark different characters, but they otherwise don't care who they mark. Because they have digging yokes attached, the behemoths are slowed until an ettin spends a move action to detach the yoke.

Ettin Hunter	Level 10 Artillery
Large natural humanoid (giant)	XP 500
HP 86; **Bloodied** 43	**Initiative** +6
AC 24, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20	**Perception** +12
Speed 6	
Traits	
Double Actions	
The ettin makes two initiative checks and takes a full turn on each initiative result. The ettin can take two immediate actions per round but only one between one turn and the next.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Javelin** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.	
➶ **Javelin** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.	
➶ **Pinion** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, and the target is restrained until it escapes (DC 18) or teleports.	
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)	
Con 20 (+10) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+4)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment 10 javelins	

4 Lingering Warrior Spirits	Level 7 Minion Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, fear; **Resist** 15 all except radiant	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Phantom Strike** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 6 damage, and the target is immobilized until the start of the spirit's next turn.	
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

The ettins have plenty of move actions, so they rip the yokes off the behemoths as soon as possible. They

fear cave-ins, so they won't willingly push the characters into the south wall.

The ettin hunter starts out of sight at the south end of the tunnel. Its best move is to *pinion* a character that has been marked, hoping that other monsters will move away and the character will be stuck without a good target.

Development: As in encounter A4, no creatures become undead (unless a character dies), but four lingering warrior spirits gather around the corpse of a slain ettin. They appear to be knights of Argramos, and they sadly touch the corpse before fading into nothingness. They'll fight back if attacked, but they don't significantly add to the challenge.

B2. Canteen

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,550 XP)

Trask's troops have set up a temporary canteen here where they can eat and drink between shifts.

Light: Bright (torches on wall).

Monsters: 3 ogre mercenaries, 2 cambion wrathborn (which animate as shambling mummies when dropped to 0 hit points).

When characters can see the area, read:
The two rooms beyond the door contain tables, chairs, and mercenaries eating and drinking. A 10-foot-wide hole in the wall connects the two rooms, and the rubble on the floor nearby suggests a recent alteration.

There's a rudimentary bar set up on the far wall next to a stack of barrels. The sharp smell of alcohol fills the air.

This is an old-fashioned bar fight, pure and simple. The cambions are sitting in the medium-size furniture in the north room, and the ogres are occupying larger furniture in the south room.

Tables: Characters can fight from atop the tables as an acrobatic stunt as described on page 180 of the *Player's Handbook* (Acrobatics DC 15); it's more a question of balance than of jumping ability. While atop the tables, characters have combat advantage against anyone not on the tables.

Any creature can smash a table to counter this tactic, however. A melee attack against the table automatically hits; the tables in the north room have 15 hp and those in the south room have 30 hp. If the table is destroyed, a character falls prone, and that square becomes difficult terrain thereafter.

Bar: Characters can fight atop the bar (as with a table) or take cover behind it. The bar has a few open casks of gin and plenty of cheap glassware, but little else. A missed attack aimed at a square adjacent to the bar breaks the glass, spreading caltrop-like shards of glass in that square. Creatures moving through that square can treat it as difficult terrain or become slowed (save ends).

Barrels: The barrels in the southwest corner of the north room are full of cheap gin—and they're leaking fumes. Whenever a creature takes fire damage in a square adjacent to the barrels, there's a 25 percent chance that the barrels burst into flame. After the stack of barrels is alight, it deals 2d8 fire damage to any creature moving through those squares or starting its turn in or adjacent to those squares.

Hole in the Wall: The rubble on the floor near the hole is difficult terrain.

3 Ogre Mercenaries **Level 8 Soldier**
Large natural humanoid (giant) XP 350 each

HP 93; **Bloodied** 46 **Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +6
Speed 8

Standard Actions

Morningstar (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.
Effect: The ogre marks the target until the end of the ogre's next turn.

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.

Brutal Sweep (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 21 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+3)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment 2 handaxes, morningstar

2 Cambion Wrathborn **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 400 each

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50 **Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 18 **Perception** +6
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy) Darkvision
Resist 10 fire

Traits

Burning Anger (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
While the wrathborn is bloodied, any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage.

Standard Actions

Pain Blade (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the wrathborn's next turn.

Path of Pain (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wrathborn shifts 4 squares and uses *pain blade* at any point during the shift.

Fire Bolt (fire, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 5 fire damage.

Burst Skyward (fire, implement) ✦ **Encounter**
Requirement: The wrathborn must be bloodied.
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and the wrathborn flies 8 squares without provoking opportunity attacks.

Minor Actions

Wicked Guise (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wrathborn must not be bloodied.
Effect: The wrathborn assumes the appearance of a specific Medium humanoid.

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Intimidate +14
Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal
Equipment leather armor, short sword, wand

2 Shambling Mummies	Level 8 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 350 each
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52	**Initiative** +3
AC 20, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 21	**Perception** +5
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison	
Traits	
Flammable Corpus	
Whenever the mummy takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Rotting Grasp** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the end of the mummy's next turn.	
Minor Actions	
Warding Curse (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). The target takes 5 necrotic damage whenever it attacks until the mummy uses this power again or until the end of the encounter.	
Str 19 (+8) **Dex** 8 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+5)	
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 6 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+7)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

Tactics: The ogre mercenaries are straightforward combatants, abusing their reach and flanking characters as much as possible.

The cambions constantly move around the battlefield. They're surprised and delighted if the gin barrels catch on fire, counting on their fire resistance to protect them from most of the damage.

Development: When the cambions die, they rise as shambling mummies—and unlike cambions, mummies hate fire. Make saving throws at the end of the encounter and after each extended rest to determine whether mummy rot infections advance as described on page 49 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

B3. Temporary Hospital

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,450 XP)

This room is set up to handle Trask's wounded. The only patients are those injured during accidents, so the vizier devil in charge has been using the corpses of the fallen to assemble a flesh golem.

Light: Bright (wall torches) in western room, dim (sputtering candles) in eastern room.

Monsters: 1 vizier devil, 2 human thugs (which animate as unhallowed wights when dropped to 0 hit points), 1 flesh golem.

When characters can see the area, read:

Two humans are sitting on bunk beds set against the walls in this room, eating porridge from bowls. An ogre lies sleeping on another bed. A hole in the wall connects this room to the next one.

If characters can see the far room, add:

In the far room is a robed devil crouching over what appears to be a large humanoid, covered in stitches and sutures, lying on the floor. A circle of candles surrounds the prone humanoid.

This encounter is all about letting the flesh golem rampage around, with the vizier devil laughing in the background like Dr. Frankenstein.

Beds: Just for the sake of property damage, the flesh golem can smash the bunk beds as it moves through those squares as part of a *golem rampage*. The wreckage left behind is difficult terrain.

Southern Doors: The southern doors are locked from the inside (Thievery DC 25). Trask's mercenaries use the hole in the western wall.

Other Barracks: The hospital occupies the northwest and north-central barracks rooms. The other four barracks have been broken into and are empty or filled with smashed bunk beds. The southwest barracks room is an exception: it's still locked (Thievery DC 25) and has its furniture intact. The bunk beds are bare of mattresses, and no personal effects are present, however. (Karlerren's troops were mostly undead and didn't need to sleep.)

Vizier Devil	Level 7 Controller (Leader)
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 300
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40	**Initiative** +4
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21	**Perception** +6
Speed 6, teleport 4	Darkvision
Resist 10 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Scepter** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, and the devil slides the target 1 square.	
➢ **Hellfire Bolt** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +10 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d10 + 2 fire damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the devil's next turn.	
Word of Command (charm) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Choose one creature within 2 squares of the devil. The devil slides that creature 3 squares, and the creature makes a melee basic attack as a free action against a creature of the devil's choice.	
Minor Actions	
Hellfire Enchantment (fire) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: One ally within 5 squares of the devil deals 5 extra fire damage with melee attacks until the end of the ally's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
Infernal Advice ✦ **Recharge** ⚅	
Trigger: An ally within 10 squares of the devil misses with an attack roll or fails a skill check.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering ally can reroll the attack roll or the skill check, gaining a +2 bonus to the reroll.	
Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Insight +11	
Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+6)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 22 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+7)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal	
Equipment scepter	

Patients: The vizier devil has three patients. Two are human thugs with minor injuries (arm sling, noticeable limp) who take up arms against intruders. The third is an ogre who has both legs splinted and

2 Human Thugs	Level 7 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Traits	
Rush into Battle	
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage.	
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment club	

bandages around her head. She's in a coma and won't wake regardless of what happens in the room.

Tactics: The flesh golem is one of the toughest foes in this part of Ghere Thau, but it's not very smart. It uses *golem rampage* as often as it possibly can. Unlike most other monsters in Ghere Thau, the golem will attack its allies, the human thugs or the soulmerged undead—every creature other than the vizier devil is an enemy.

The vizier devil is triumphant when its creation roars to life, and that triumph lasts until the golem attacks someone it shouldn't. It's content to taunt the characters and use *word of command* every round while the golem does the actual fighting.

The vizier devil knows that the golem hates fire, so it doesn't use its *hellfire* enchantment if the golem is still active. But if the flesh golem attacks the vizier devil (possible only if the devil is randomly targeted), the devil panics and shoots a *hellfire bolt* at the golem in the following round.

Development: When the human thugs die, they become unhallowed wights. The wights ignore the golem even if it attacks them, focusing on hitting the characters with *soul-draining claw* and eventually triggering *unhallowed blight*.

Flesh Golem	Level 12 Elite Brute
Large natural animate (construct)	XP 1,400
HP 304; **Bloodied** 152	**Initiative** +4
AC 24, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21	**Perception** +5
Speed 6 (cannot shift)	Darkvision
Resist 10 cold	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Primal Fear	
When the golem takes fire damage from an attack, it takes a free action to move up to its speed, and each square it moves must place it farther from the attacker. If it cannot move at least half its speed, it grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.	
Life-Giving Jolt	
When the golem takes lightning damage, it can make a basic attack as a free action.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +17 vs. AC, or +19 vs. AC while the golem is bloodied	
Hit: 3d10 + 9 damage.	
⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The golem uses *slam* twice. Each attack knocks the target prone if it hits.	
⸸ **Golem Rampage** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Effect: The golem moves up to its speed + 2. During this movement, the golem can move through enemies' spaces, and when the golem first enters a creature's space, it uses *slam* against that creature.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Berserk Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An attack damages the golem while it is bloodied.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The golem uses *slam* against a random target within its reach.	
Str 20 (+11) **Dex** 7 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+5)	
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 3 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

The vizier devil knows the password for the long staircase: "Krelunithawn." If questioned, it makes the best deal it can before giving up the password. The devil also has a key that opens the door to the long staircase.

2 Unhallowed Wights	Level 7 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 300 each
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40	**Initiative** +5
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 19	**Perception** +2
Speed 6, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Soul-Draining Claw** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge and is immobilized (save ends).	
Special: If the wight takes radiant damage, this attack does not cause targets to lose a healing surge until the end of the wight's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
⇜ **Unhallowed Blight** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares makes a successful saving throw.	
Attack (Opportunity Action): Close burst 5 (triggering enemy in the burst); +10 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 5 necrotic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Intimidate +11, Athletics +12	
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 8 (+2)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 17 (+6)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	

Treasure: On a table is an 11th-level magic item, which the vizier devil was examining in its spare time.

B4. Lackey Quarters

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,575 XP)

These are the living quarters for Trask's human lackeys—theoretically part of the mercenary company but treated little better than slaves. Right now they're making porridge to feed the rest of Trask's troops.

Light: Dim (stoves).

Monsters: 2 ogre mercenaries, 5 human thugs (which animate as unhallowed wights when dropped to 0 hit points).

When characters can see the area, read:
This room, lit in red from stoves in the corner, has an open area near the doorway and stone staircases leading to an upper alcove. An ogre with a morningstar stands near the bottom of each staircase. A second ogre stands in the middle of the upper alcove, shouting at humans in ragged robes: "Stir faster!"

The human thugs, if killed, become much more deadly unhallowed wights. But if the characters keep them alive, they can provide useful information.

Balcony: It's a 20-foot drop (and thus 2d10 damage) when a creature falls off the ledge. A low stone balustrade grants creatures a +2 bonus to the saving throw to avoid the fall and instead fall prone in that square.

Stoves: The stoves are being used to cook porridge, but they're much hotter than they need to be. If a creature is pushed against a stove (forced movement would take the creature into the next square if the furnace weren't there), it takes 2d8 fire damage.

Tactics: The ogre mercenaries try to mark whichever characters look most capable in melee—but they aren't very bright and will underestimate smaller and lightly armored enemies. They immediately order the lackeys to grab whatever's handy (treat porridge ladles as clubs) and attack.

The human thugs are just minions, but they're minions who turn into much more lethal unhallowed wights. Play the thugs aggressively; they'd rather take their chances in battle than suffer the ogres' punishment for cowardice.

If the ogres die, though, the lackeys' attitude changes. They immediately surrender and will do whatever the characters ask. They can describe in general terms any parts of areas A and B that the characters haven't visited yet. None of them have been to the upper area.

Development: Whenever a human lackey dies, an unhallowed wight rises in its place. This is one of the most undead-heavy encounters in the adventure, and characters might end up facing all five wights at once.

The unhallowed wights are straightforward combatants. Their *soul-draining claw* forces the characters to make saving throws, which will eventually trigger the *unhallowed blight*.

2 Ogre Mercenaries — **Level 8 Soldier**
Large natural humanoid (giant) — XP 350 each

HP 93; **Bloodied** 46 — **Initiative** +8
AC 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +6
Speed 8

Standard Actions

Morningstar (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.
Effect: The ogre marks the target until the end of the ogre's next turn.

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.

Brutal Sweep (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 22 (+10) — **Dex** 15 (+6) — **Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 21 (+9) — **Int** 7 (+2) — **Cha** 8 (+3)

Alignment chaotic evil — **Languages** Giant
Equipment 2 handaxes, morningstar

5 Human Thugs — **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. — **Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Traits

Rush into Battle
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.

Standard Actions

Club (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.

Str 14 (+5) — **Dex** 11 (+3) — **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4) — **Int** 10 (+3) — **Cha** 13 (+4)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Common
Equipment club

5 Unhallowed Wights — **Level 7 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) — XP 300 each

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40 — **Initiative** +5
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +2
Speed 6, climb 4 — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

Soul-Draining Claw (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge and is immobilized (save ends).
Special: If the wight takes radiant damage, this attack does not cause targets to lose a healing surge until the end of the wight's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Unhallowed Blight (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares makes a successful saving throw.
Attack (Opportunity Action): Close burst 5 (triggering enemy in the burst); +10 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5 necrotic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

Skills Intimidate +11, Athletics +12
Str 19 (+7) — **Dex** 11 (+3) — **Wis** 8 (+2)
Con 16 (+6) — **Int** 10 (+3) — **Cha** 17 (+6)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common

B5. Prison Cells

Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,350 XP)

Trask has a disloyal lieutenant locked up here—an oni mage that tries to trick the characters into releasing him.

Insight DC 31: That's no ordinary human in the cell. An illusion covers the creature's true form.

Light: Bright (wall torches).

Monsters: 2 hell hounds, 2 human thugs (which animate as unhallowed wights when dropped to 0 hit points), 1 oni mage.

2 Hell Hounds — **Level 7 Brute**
Medium elemental beast (fire) — XP 300 each

HP 96; **Bloodied** 48 — **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +6
Speed 7

Traits

Fire Shield ✦ Aura 3
Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d8 fire damage.

Standard Actions

Bite (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 5 fire damage.

Fiery Breath (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +10 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 4 fire damage.

Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 17 (+6)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 10 (+3)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

2 Human Thugs — **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 75 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Traits

Rush into Battle
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.

Standard Actions

Club (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.

Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+4)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment club

When characters can see the area, read:
Two humans holding immense fiery hounds with chained leashes walk back and forth between two prison cells. One appears empty, but the other holds a forlorn human woman leaning against the bars.

2 Unhallowed Wights — **Level 7 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) — XP 300 each

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40 — **Initiative** +5
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +2
Speed 6, climb 4 — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

Soul-Draining Claw (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge and is immobilized (save ends).
Special: If the wight takes radiant damage, this attack does not cause targets to lose a healing surge until the end of the wight's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Unhallowed Blight (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares makes a successful saving throw.
Attack (Opportunity Action): Close burst 5 (triggering enemy in the burst); +10 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5 necrotic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

Skills Intimidate +11, Athletics +12
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 8 (+2)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 17 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

A suit of chainmail sits on a table in the southwest corner, a hilt sticking out from underneath the pile.

This is a straightforward battle between hell hounds and the characters, although unhallowed wights can rise in the middle of the battle to complicate things. The "human" in the cell is actually an oni mage who has used *deceptive veil* in the hopes that the characters will set it free.

Table: The table in the southwest corner has a suit of chainmail and a greatsword on it. If released, the oni mage grabs that right away, saying, "I don't want to be useless in a fight."

Tactics: The human thugs drop the chains and order the hell hounds to attack, then pull back and try to avoid the characters.

Oni Mage — **Level 10 Elite Lurker**
Large natural humanoid — XP 1,000

HP 172; **Bloodied** 86 — **Initiative** +10
AC 24, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22 — **Perception** +7
Speed 7, fly 8 (clumsy) — Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Regeneration
The oni regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point.

Standard Actions

Greatsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 1d12 + 8 damage. If the oni has combat advantage against the target, the target takes 2d6 extra damage.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: The oni uses *greatsword* against two different creatures. If the oni is invisible, it can use *greatsword* against each of them twice.

Freezing Blast (cold) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 12 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Lightning Storm (lightning) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + 10 lightning damage.

Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The oni becomes invisible until immediately after it uses an attack power.

Minor Actions

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The oni disguises itself to appear as a Medium or Large humanoid until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 31 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Skills Arcana +14, Bluff +15, Insight +12
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 20 (+10) **Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+10)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment chainmail, greatsword

The hell hounds use *fiery breath* as often as they can, and they don't mind hitting the human lackeys (which kills them and brings on the unhallowed wights).

Development: When the human thugs die, they rise as unhallowed wights, fighting the characters until slain. The hell hounds are averse to the undead and move away from them if possible, even provoking opportunity attacks to do so.

The oni mage cowers in the back of the cell, disguised as a human, until the battle is over. It makes up a cover story about being a teamster for a caravan and being knocked unconscious in battle by Trask's mercenaries. But the oni hasn't spent much time in human civilization, which might trip it up in a longer conversation (its Bluff check is +3 against the characters' Insight checks).

If the characters seem friendly, the oni mage asks to fight alongside the characters to "earn" its freedom. It knows the password for the long staircase, claiming to have overheard it (another Bluff attempt). It also knows that the storm shaman (encounter A4) and the vizier devil (encounter B3) have the keys.

The oni mage plans to lead the characters into the middle of a tough fight, then turn on them when at least two characters are bloodied, claiming credit for the victory and hopefully getting back into Trask's good graces.

U1. Upper Entry Hall

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,500 XP)

The upper chambers took less battle damage than the lower areas, but a crew here is repairing some of the columns holding up the roof.

Dungeoneering DC 25: The pillar that the gorgon was pushing against isn't placed properly against the ceiling.

Light: Bright (*continual light* globes on the walls).

Monsters: 1 steel gorgon, 1 medusa venom arrow, 1 medusa bodyguard. (When either medusa drops to 0 hit points, it animates as a shambling mummy.)

When characters can see the area, read:

An immense bull made of iron leans against one of the pillars holding up the ceiling. A snake-haired woman with a sword urges the gorgon to push harder. Another snake-haired woman walks along a narrow balcony around the perimeter of the room.

Light rectangles on the walls indicate where paintings once hung. Wide passageways lead east and west from here, and a hallway continues south as well.

The tension in this encounter derives from the petrification saving throws. Emphasize the transitions from slowed to immobilized, and from immobilized to petrified.

Balcony: The balcony is 10 feet off the ground. It has only a thin wooden railing—not enough to provide a bonus to the saving throw to avoid being pushed off it.

Damaged Pillar: The gorgon hasn't moved the pillar back into place yet. Only the edge of the pillar is touching the ceiling. If the pillar takes any damage, there's a 25% chance that it'll start a cave-in as described on page 91 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, except that the skill DCs are 5 points lower.

Tactics: The gorgon uses its *petrifying breath* as soon as it can hit at least two characters; it'll provoke opportunity attacks and ignore marks if necessary. Then it makes *double attacks* until its breath recharges.

The medusa bodyguard tries to mark a character, then moves away and forces the character to chase it around or ignore the mark. Characters might wrongly assume that the medusa bodyguard has a petrifying gaze. Let them.

The medusa venom arrow shoots its shortbow from the balcony, descending to the main floor and using its *petrifying stare* only if the gorgon dies.

The gorgon is immune to the medusas' petrification, but the medusas are not immune to the gorgon's *petrifying breath*.

THE LONG STAIRCASE

Getting to Trask means reaching the upper level of Ghere Thau. And to do that, characters must ascend the long staircase.

As indicated on the Ghere Thau map, tunnels connect levels A and B with each other and with the base of the long staircase. The iron door at the bottom of the stair is secured with both a lock and a magic password.

When the characters approach the door, a magic mouth says, "Present an officer key." One round later, jets of flame bathe every square within 20 feet of the door (+15 vs. Reflex; 4d8 fire damage). If a character puts a key (obtained from the storm shaman in A4 or the vizier devil in B3) in the lock, no flames appear.

After the characters unlock the door, the magic mouth speaks again: "Speak the officer password." If they say "Krelunithawn," the door opens. Otherwise the jets of flame scour the 20-foot area again.

The storm shaman in area A4 and the vizier devil in encounter B3 know the password. They won't volunteer it, but they'll readily give it up if interrogated. (They figure the denizens of the upper level are capable of defending themselves.) The oni mage in encounter B4 can provide it as well.

Bypassing Security: Characters can pick the lock with a DC 25 Thievery check, but they'll have only one chance before the jets of flames activate. Defeating the password is even tougher. It takes a DC 25 Arcana check to understand the magic triggers involved, then another DC 30 Thievery check to keep the magic mouth from asking for a password. Disabling the jets of flame is a DC 30 Thievery check, and each square requires a separate check.

The Staircase: The stairs ascend for 200 feet, then end near encounter U1.

Development: When a medusa dies, the snakes fall out of its head and it rises as a shambling mummy the next round. The mummy resists the poison damage from the gorgon's breath but not the petrification. If characters are having a hard time with this encounter, encourage them to maneuver so the mummies will be caught in the gorgon's breath attack. Failing that, nothing from this chamber will pursue the characters down the long staircase; they can fall back and regroup if necessary.

Medusa Bodyguard	**Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700
HP 123; **Bloodied** 61	**Initiative** +11
AC 28, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24	**Perception** +15
Speed 6	
Resist 10 poison	
Standard Actions	
Bastard Sword (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Effect: The bodyguard marks the target until the end of the bodyguard's next turn.	
Longbow (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 9 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Triggered Actions	
Mind-Venom Gaze (charm, poison, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when the bodyguard hits with *bastard sword*	
Trigger: An enemy marked by the bodyguard makes an attack that does not include it as a target.	
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +15 vs. Will. The attack must include the triggering enemy as a target.	
Hit: 2d6 + 3 poison and psychic damage, and if the target is the triggering enemy, the target is stunned until the end of its turn.	
Skills Bluff +14, Stealth +14	
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 19 (+10)	
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 17 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment bastard sword, longbow	

Medusa Venom Arrow	**Level 12 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, female	XP 700
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	**Initiative** +12
AC 26, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23	**Perception** +14
Speed 6	
Immune petrification; **Resist** 10 poison	

Standard Actions

Serpent Hair (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 poison damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws until the end of the medusa's next turn.

Shortbow (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Triggered Actions

Petrifying Stare ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy starts its turn within 2 squares of the medusa.
Effect (Opportunity Action): Close blast 2 (triggering enemy in the blast). The target is slowed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is petrified until one of the following conditions is satisfied.
- ✦ The use of an appropriate power, such as *divine cleansing*.
- ✦ The willing kiss of the medusa that petrified the creature (a medusa might do this to gain information or to luxuriate in the victim's fear before returning it to stone).
- ✦ The medusa responsible for the petrification is killed and its blood is applied to the stony lips of the victim before a full day passes.

Skills Bluff +15, Stealth +17		
Str 14 (+8)	**Dex** 22 (+12)	**Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 18 (+10)	**Int** 12 (+7)	**Cha** 19 (+10)
Alignment evil	**Languages** Common	
Equipment shortbow		

Steel Gorgon	**Level 15 Elite Soldier**
Large elemental beast (earth)	XP 2,400
HP 302; **Bloodied** 151	**Initiative** +12
AC 31, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27	**Perception** +11
Speed 8 (earth walk)	Truesight 5
Immune forced movement, knocked prone, petrification	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	

Standard Actions

Gore ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 7 damage, or 4d10 + 13 if charging, and the target falls prone.

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The gorgon uses gore twice.

Petrifying Breath (poison) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 14 poison damage, and the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead dazed and immobilized (save ends both).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead petrified.

Str 23 (+13)	**Dex** 16 (+10)	**Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 23 (+13)	**Int** 2 (+3)	**Cha** 7 (+5)
Alignment unaligned	**Languages** –	

2 Shambling Mummies	**Level 8 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 350 each
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52	**Initiative** +3
AC 20, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 21	**Perception** +5
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison	

Traits

Flammable Corpus
Whenever the mummy takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Standard Actions

Rotting Grasp (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the end of the mummy's next turn.

Minor Actions

Warding Curse (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). The target takes 5 necrotic damage whenever it attacks until the mummy uses this power again or until the end of the encounter.

Str 19 (+8)	**Dex** 8 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 14 (+6)	**Int** 6 (+2)	**Cha** 17 (+7)
Alignment unaligned	**Languages** Common	

U2. Officers' Quarters

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,600 XP)

The six chambers near the entry hall have been claimed by Trask's officers (mostly cambions). Many are on duty elsewhere in Ghere Thau, but the southwest room is occupied by Trask's cousin and her shadow strangler retinue.

Arcana DC 12: All the double doors in this hallway have been secured with an Arcane Lock ritual (Thievery DC 20 to bypass, Strength DC 20 to break down).

Light: Bright (*continual light* globes on the walls).

Monsters: 1 cambion infernal scion (animates as a battle wight when dropped to 0 hit points), 2 shadow stranglers.

When characters can see the area, read:

This room has been furnished as a simple apartment, with a bed on the far wall, a wardrobe in the northwest corner, and a desk near the door.

Standing near the bed is a devilish winged creature with a longsword, flanked by shadowy creatures with indistinct shapes.

This battle starts in the infernal scion's quarters, but it will likely spill out into the entry hall (where there's more room for a satisfying fight). The shadow stranglers' *shadowy touch* and the cambion's *majestic stride* and fly speed should help them get past characters in the hallway.

Tactics: If possible, the infernal scion stays in one place, attacking in melee and using both *dread command* and *oath of the nine*. After she becomes bloodied, the scion moves around more, using *oath of the nine* and *fiend razor*.

Cambion Infernal Scion **Level 12 Elite Soldier**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 1,400

HP 250; **Bloodied** 125 **Initiative** +14
AC 28, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 25 **Perception** +10
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy) Darkvision
Resist 10 fire
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

⨺ **Burning Longsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 11 fire damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the scion's next turn.

⨺ **Fiend Razor** ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The scion must be bloodied.
Effect: The scion uses *burning longsword* twice.

Minor Actions

Dread Command (charm) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Requirement: The scion must not be bloodied.
Attack: Ranged 5 (one enemy marked by the scion); +15 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated until the end of the scion's next turn.

Oath of the Nine ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: One creature within 3 squares of the scion is marked and gains vulnerable 10 fire until the end of the scion's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Majestic Stride ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy marked by the scion and within 5 squares of it makes an attack that does not include the scion as a target.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The scion teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy and uses *burning longsword* against it.

Skills Diplomacy +17, History +15, Intimidate +17
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 21 (+11) **Int** 19 (+10) **Cha** 23 (+12)
Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal
Equipment chainmail, longsword

The shadow stranglers use *shadowy touch*, *blinding shadows*, and *devouring dark* to sow confusion in combat.

When any of the monsters are bloodied, all three of them try to retreat, regrouping in the upper entry hall.

2 Shadow Stranglers **Level 9 Artillery**
Medium shadow humanoid XP 400 each

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22 **Perception** +6
Speed 8 Darkvision
Resist insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Traits

Born of Shadows
The strangler can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Shadowy Touch** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the strangler becomes invisible to the target until the end of the strangler's next turn.

Blinding Shadows (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target cannot see anything more than 3 squares away from it until the end of the strangler's next turn.

Strangling Darkness (necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is restrained and takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends both).

Devouring Dark (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the strangler's next turn.
Miss: Half damage.

Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +13
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+8)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

Development: When the infernal scion dies, she rises as a battle wight. This surprises the shadow stranglers, but they continue to fight at the wight's side.

Treasure: The southeast room contains a small chest with 650 gp.

Battle Wight **Level 9 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 400

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49 **Initiative** +7
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 22 **Perception** +3
Speed 5 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

⨺ **Soul-Draining Longsword** (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Soul Reaping (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one immobilized creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + 9 necrotic damage, and the wight regains 10 hit points.

Skills Intimidate +14
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+3)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword.

U3. Seer's Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 8 (1,900 XP)

This chamber, set with inlaid summoning circles and other ritual aids, has been claimed by an ettin wrath chanter that advises Trask and his unruly mezzo demon servants.

Perception or Arcana DC 25: The summoning circles have been defaced.

Light: Bright (*continual light* globes on the walls).

Monsters: 2 mezzodemons, 1 ettin wrath chanter (when it dies, 3 lingering warrior spirits appear over its corpse, but they do not fight unless provoked, so they are not included in the XP total).

Ettin Wrath Chanter	Level 8 Elite Controller (Leader)
Large natural humanoid (giant)	XP 700
HP 184; **Bloodied** 92	**Initiative** +5
AC 22, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 20	**Perception** +11
Speed 6	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Rage Song ✦ Aura 5	
Enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls while in the aura. Allies gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls while in the aura.	
Double Actions	
The ettin makes two initiative checks and takes a full turn on each initiative result. The ettin can take two immediate actions per round but only one between one turn and the next.	
Dual Brain	
At the end of each of its turns, the ettin automatically ends any dazing, stunning, or charm effect on itself.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Smash ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Invoke Fury ✦ At-Will	
Effect: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst). The target must use a free action to charge or make a basic attack against a target of the ettin's choice. The movement for this charge does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+6)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 8 (+3) **Cha** 17 (+7)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Giant	

When characters can see the area, read:

Two demonic creatures stand within sigil-inscribed circles in the northern part of this chamber, and between them is an ettin conversing with each of them simultaneously.

To the south are other magic circles and a balcony above double doors heading south.

This encounter matches a high-damage controller (the ettin) with three soldiers (the mezzodemons) that have some control tricks of their own.

The ettin wrath chanter conjured the demons with a scroll he found when he arrived in Ghere Thau.

2 Mezzodemons	Level 11 Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (demon	XP 600 each
HP 113; **Bloodied** 56	**Initiative** +9
AC 27, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23	**Perception** +13
Speed 8	Darkvision
Resist 10 poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Trident** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 18 damage.	
⸸ **Skewering Tines** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Requirement: The mezzodemon must be using a trident.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both). Until the effect ends, the mezzodemon cannot use *trident* or *skewering tines*.	
Poison Breath (poison) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +14 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d6 + 5 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Variable Resistance ✦ 2/Encounter	
Trigger: The mezzodemon takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.	
Effect (Free Action): The mezzodemon gains resist 10 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter or until it uses *variable resistance* again.	
Skills Intimidate +11	
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+8)	
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)	
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal	
Equipment trident	

Magic Circles: The mezzodemons are standing in the circles because the wrath chanter told them to, not because they have to. It'll take 50 gp to repair the scratched-up carvings on the circles' perimeter; if repaired, the inlaid circle can substitute for the component cost of the Magic Circle ritual.

Scrying Pool (S): This shallow pool of water has inlaid silver runes around its edge. A DC 17 Arcana check is sufficient to reveal that the pool acts as a focus for the Wizard's Sight and View Location rituals.

3 Lingering Warrior Spirits	Level 7 Minion Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, fear; **Resist** 15 all except radiant	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Phantom Strike** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 6 damage, and the target is immobilized until the start of the spirit's next turn.	
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)	
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

Portal Circle (P): This is a permanent teleportation circle that reduces the component cost and adds an Arcana bonus for rituals such as Linked Portal.

Apartments: The two small rooms to the east are apartments for Ghere Thau's arcane staff. The wrath chanter has moved into the south one, and the north one has only scraps of debris from its former occupants.

Tactics: The ettin alternates between *invoke fury* and *smash* attacks. Because it has two full turns each round, it can do both. It uses both to clear away enemies that are adjacent to it.

The mezzodemons breathe as often as they can, then try to set up *skewering tines*. If a mezzodemon has access to neither its breath weapon nor its trident (because *skewering tines* is active), it flees to the southern balcony and waits for one of those attacks to be available.

Development: As in encounters A4 and B1, no monsters turn into soulmerged undead. Three lingering warrior spirits appear when the ettin dies and sadly gesture toward it before disappearing. They attack if a character attacks them, but they aren't significant to the challenge of this encounter.

The wrath chanter has a key to the long staircase and knows the password (but the characters probably do by this point, too).

Treasure: Two treasure parcels are in the southern apartment: a level 10 magic item, ritual scrolls worth 1,000 gp, and 400 gp.

U4. Bombard Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

This room holds Ghere Thau's artillery: channels in the floor that magically propel catapult stones at the crossroads below.

Light: Bright (*continual light* globes on the walls and daylight from outside).

Monsters: 3 cambion wrathborn (which animate as mummy tomb guardians when dropped to 0 hit points).

When characters can see the area, read:

A massive furnace stands before you in this elongated room. A channel cut into the floor runs the length of the chamber, splitting into four channels near the south end, which is partially open to the outside sky.

Three cambions stand near the southern opening, looking out at the crossroads below.

This encounter starts off simple, but becomes more chaotic when a wrathborn turns on the bombard apparatus and the mummy guardians must avoid the fire-using cambions.

Bombard Apparatus: This furnace has a large lever on the southwest side. Pulling the lever (a minor action) causes a pulse of flame to move down the channels from the furnace to the four apertures in the southern wall. Roll initiative for the bombard apparatus; at that point in each round, the pulse of flame burns anyone standing in the same square as a channel.

Channels: The channels carved in the stone floor are only 2 feet deep and 2 feet across—easy to step over when the bombard isn't active. Whenever a pulse of flame travels through the channel, it deals 3d8 fire damage to any creature standing in the same square as a channel.

Catapult Stones: To the east is a pyramid-shaped stack of catapult stones that reaches almost to the ceiling. If a creature moves one of the catapult stones in the lowest row, the stack collapses and the stones roll across the floor.

3 Cambion Wrathborn — **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) — XP 400 each

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50 — **Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +6
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy) — Darkvision
Resist 10 fire

Traits

☼ **Burning Anger** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
While the wrathborn is bloodied, any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Pain Blade** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the wrathborn's next turn.

⨺ **Path of Pain** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The wrathborn shifts 4 squares and uses *pain blade* at any point during the shift.

➢ **Fire Bolt** (fire, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 5 fire damage.

✧ **Burst Skyward** (fire, implement) ✦ **Encounter**
Requirement: The wrathborn must be bloodied.
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and the wrathborn flies 8 squares without provoking opportunity attacks.

Minor Actions

Wicked Guise (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The wrathborn must not be bloodied.
Effect: The wrathborn assumes the appearance of a specific Medium humanoid.

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Intimidate +14
Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal
Equipment leather armor, short sword, wand

3 Mummy Tomb Guardians — **Level 11 Soldier**
Medium natural animate (undead) — XP 600 each

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55 — **Initiative** +6
AC 27, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23 — **Perception** +6
Speed 5 — Darkvision
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Traits

Flammable Corpus
When the mummy takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Standard Actions

⨺ **Khopesh** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target cannot shift (save ends).

Minor Actions

Curse of No Escape ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). The target is slowed until the mummy curses a different creature or the mummy is destroyed.

Triggered Actions

Overwhelming Fear (fear) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares gains line of sight to any tomb guardian for the first time this encounter.
Attack (No Action): Ranged 10 (triggering enemy); +14 vs. Will
Hit: The target is stunned until the end of the tomb guardian's next turn.

Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 8 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 19 (+9)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common

Creatures east of the channels and south of the point where the channels diverge get hit with a +15 attack against their Fortitude defense; the catapult stones deal 2d8 damage and push the creature into the nearest vacant channel space.

If the bombard apparatus is active, one catapult stone will be propelled from the easternmost channel every round. The stones hit the empty crossroads below.

Ledge: The southern wall of the room is ordinary stone for the 3 feet nearest the floor, then open to the 10-foot high ceiling. Characters along the southern

edge can see a vista of the oasis, crossroads, and desert beyond.

The channels end in round holes at the floor in the southern wall with metal collars that shift within each aperture. Moving the collars allows rudimentary aiming of the catapult stones thrown by the bombard.

It's hard to push creatures off the ledge; the low wall provides a +4 bonus to saving throws to avoid plummeting 50 feet to a ledge below. It's a DC 25 Athletics check to climb back up.

Tactics: Two wrathborn engage the characters in melee combat directly while the third moves to turn on the bombard apparatus (the fire hurts the characters more than the cambions).

Development: Wrathborn that die become mummy tomb guardians. The tomb guardians avoid wrathborn (whose auras damage them) and channel spaces if the bombard apparatus is active. They use *curse of no escape* and *overwhelming fear* to keep the characters near the channels if they can.

U5. Trask's Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 11 (2,900 XP)

This is where Trask lives—along with his now-undead sister (locked in the northeast room) and the earthquake dragon he's befriended.

Perception DC 17 (anyone within 10 squares of the northeast double doors): There's a dull pounding coming from the doors, like someone knocking.

Light: Bright (*continual light* globes on the walls and daylight from outside).

Monsters: 1 cambion infernal scion (which animates as a battle wight commander when dropped to 0 hit points), 1 young earthquake dragon.

When characters can see the area, read:
This is a chamber of ruined luxury: scorched frescoes of battle scenes on the wall, broken pottery on shelves, and stained rugs on the floor. A red-caped cambion with a longsword bows as you enter. "You've carved a pretty path through my hirelings," he snarls. "Let's see how you fare against the truly elite."

Battle Wight Commander Level 12 Soldier (leader)
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 700

HP 124; **Bloodied** 62 **Initiative** +10
AC 28, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 25 **Perception** +13
Speed 5 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Standard Actions

⨁ **Soul-Draining Longsword** (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 necrotic damage, the target loses a healing surge, and it is immobilized and weakened until the end of its next turn.

Soul Reaping (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one immobilized creature); +15 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 18 necrotic damage, and the wight and all its allies within 2 squares of it regain 10 hit points.

Skills Intimidate +16

Str 20 (+11)	**Dex** 15 (+8)	**Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 20 (+11)	**Int** 15 (+8)	**Cha** 20 (+11)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment heavy shield, longsword, plate armor

Trask darts inside and outside, staying as elusive as possible while taunting the characters and letting the earthquake dragon do most of the fighting.

Ledge: There's no guard rail on this ledge, so creatures forced off the edge must succeed at a saving throw to avoid plummeting 50 feet to a ledge below. It's a DC 25 Athletics check to climb back up. Creatures who make the save are knocked prone instead.

Northeast Room: This room is locked (Thievery DC 1; Trask has the key in his pocket). Inside is Trask's sister, Skaela. She died a few days ago and became a battle wight commander, so Trask locked her inside while he tried to figure out how to restore her to life. See the "Talking to Skaela" sidebar.

Tactics: In the first round, Trask moves out onto the ledge and calls, "Defend me, Aricanthros!" (He's addressing the dragon, which arrives in the second

Cambion Infernal Scion	**Level 12 Elite Soldier**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 1,400
HP 250; **Bloodied** 125	**Initiative** +14
AC 28, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 25	**Perception** +10
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)	Darkvision
Resist 10 fire	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Burning Longsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 11 fire damage.	
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the scion's next turn.	
⸸ **Fiend Razor** ✦ **At-Will**	
Requirement: The scion must be bloodied.	
Effect: The scion uses *burning longsword* twice.	
Minor Actions	
⚚ **Dread Command** (charm) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Requirement: The scion must not be bloodied.	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one enemy marked by the scion); +15 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is dominated until the end of the scion's next turn.	
Oath of the Nine ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Effect: One creature within 3 squares of the scion is marked and gains vulnerable 10 fire until the end of the scion's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Majestic Stride** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy marked by the scion and within 5 squares of it makes an attack that does not include the scion as a target.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The scion teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy and uses *burning longsword* against it.	
Skills Diplomacy +17, History +15, Intimidate +17	
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+10)	
Con 21 (+11) **Int** 19 (+10) **Cha** 23 (+12)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal	
Equipment chainmail, longsword	

TALKING TO SKAELA

Trask's sister Skaela used her willpower and the isolation of her imprisonment to resist a complete soulmerge longer than the others who've died at Ghere Thau. Her tenuous grip on sanity is slipping away, and she's on the verge of becoming a wight that hates the living and doesn't remember her former life.

She'll fight the characters if given a chance. If they can figure out how to talk to her, they can take advantage of her final moments of lucidity. Most of Skaela's muttering is typical undead fare: "Consume the living! Let all souls grow dark!" But the characters can speak to Skaela as the cambion she was three times: once through trickery (a Bluff check), once through an honest appeal (Diplomacy), and once by browbeating her (Intimidate).

Each check is DC 17. When the characters succeed, Skaela shakes her head as if waking up, then delivers dialogue like the following lines. The undead is back in control when the italics start.

- ✦ "I'm not alone in my own head—one of the knights wants my body, but the desire is twisted somehow. I'm slipping away . . . *no, I'm becoming stronger, ever stronger.*"
- ✦ "One of the traps they left behind killed me. Then a twisted spirit entered me. My brother, Trask, locked me up here. I want him to save me . . . *and I want to consume his soul, and yours, and yours, and yours.*"
- ✦ "Trask tried to keep me a secret from everyone else, and he thought the effect would fade over time . . . *the fool! I hope it grows, expands, until every fallen soldier rises to fight again!*"

When roleplaying Skaela, don't tie yourself to the mechanics of the skill checks. Let the characters talk to Skaela—both her old personality and the undead she's becoming—as long as everyone at the table is having a good time. Then have her descend fully into the persona of a soulmerged undead, never to return.

round.) In subsequent rounds, Trask moves back and forth between inside and outside. When he's inside, he marks as many characters as possible. When he's outside, he uses *dread command* to dominate a character, then sends that character running off the ledge. After he's bloodied, he makes bull rush attacks to accomplish the same thing.

Trask knows the timing for the earthquake dragon's *rising tremors*, so he'll fly to avoid the burst attack after the dragon reaches aura 5.

Trask immediately attacks any character who tries to open the northeast room, regardless of the danger. "Don't set her free!" he cries.

The earthquake dragon lands on the ledge at the start of round 2, then makes melee attacks while building up its *rising tremors.*

Development: Like any of the other cambions, Trask is vulnerable to becoming a soulmerged undead. He's seen what happened to his sister, though, and he wants to avoid that fate. If Trask falls below 25 hit points, he'll try to kill himself in one of two ways: by throwing himself off the ledge but keeping his wings furled, or by instructing the dragon to grab him, fly away, and drop him from a great height.

Either way, he cries, "Farewell, my sister! Better dead than undead!" before he plummets to his death, leaving a corpse too mangled to rise again.

Young Earthquake Dragon **Level 9 Elite Soldier**
Large elemental magical beast (earth, dragon) XP 800

HP 206; **Bloodied** 103 **Initiative** +12
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20 **Perception** +9
Speed 8 (earth walk), burrow 4, fly 4 (clumsy) Darkvision, tremorsense 10
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Quaking Earth ✦ Aura** 1
When any enemy within the aura makes an attack that does not include the dragon as a target, that enemy falls prone and takes 5 damage.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Bite ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage.

⨁ **Claw ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: The dragon uses *bite* and *claw* or uses *claw* twice.

Earthen Maw ✦ Recharge ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead petrified (save ends).

Minor Actions

Rising Tremors ✦ Recharge at the start of any turn when *quaking earth* is aura 1
Effect: The *quaking earth* expands to aura 3. At the start of the dragon's next turn, the *quaking earth* expands to aura 5. At the start of its following turn, the dragon makes the following attack.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone and cannot stand up (save ends).
Effect: The *quaking earth* aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 1).

Triggered Actions

Sudden Quake ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The dragon is pulled, pushed, slid, or knocked prone.
Effect (Free Action): Each enemy in the dragon's aura falls prone.

Str 21 (+9)	**Dex** 22 (+10)	**Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 23 (+10)	**Int** 19 (+8)	**Cha** 17 (+7)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic, Primordial

If Trask isn't able to kill himself by falling, he rises as a battle wight commander and fights until destroyed.

Treasure: Three statuettes on shelves in the main room are worth 150 gp each. In Skaela's room is a level 13 magic item of your choice.

Concluding the Adventure

Four days after the characters arrive at Ghere Thau, a heavily guarded caravan from the Weaver's Guild reaches the oasis. The caravan masters are pleased to hear that Trask's mercenaries no longer hold Ghere Thau, but they're troubled by the necromantic energy that still suffuses the fortress.

Their disquiet about the characters' reports of soulmerged undead doesn't prevent them from paying, however, and they gladly turn over the balance of the 1,000 gp per character payment. The caravan guards set watches at the oasis and at Ghere Thau's main entrance, and the characters are free to go, either by traveling overland or by using the linked portal circle in encounter U3.

What happens next in Ghere Thau is an open question. Perhaps Karlerren's necromantic magic will fade over time, or maybe an order of clerics will attempt a cleansing ritual. Until then, every would-be necromancer will crave what Ghere Thau offers: an easy way to raise an undead army.

About the Author

David Noonan had a hand in designing more than fifty D&D products, mostly for the 3rd and 4th Editions of the game. A freelance writer, he blogs regularly about D&D in its many forms at nnnooner.blogspot.com.

Dead Haven

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 4–6

By Jeffrey Ludwig

Illustrations by Wayne England and Ralph Beisner

Cartography by Jared Blando and Jason Engle

When the heroes are sent to deal with an infestation of ghouls in the town of Arnesbloom, they find that it is the undead—not the living—who need their help. Drawn into a battle against the cult of Orcus and a race to stop an ancient evil from returning to the land, the heroes must ultimately answer two questions. How does one defeat an enemy who cannot be killed? And is undeath a life worth living?

Background

Centuries ago, a powerful cleric of the Raven Queen named Rasmus forsook the teachings of his god and began using the power she had granted him to unnaturally extend his own life. Eventually, magic alone was no longer enough to sustain Rasmus, so he undertook forbidden rites in which he drank offerings of blood made by his disciples to prolong his life indefinitely. The dark magic of the rites corrupted the cleric, transforming him into a vampire. Declaring his triumph over death, Rasmus offered the "gift" of immortality to his loyal disciples, slaying them and raising them as his spawn.

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His disciples began to prey on the simple folk of the surrounding villages to slake their thirst, and Rasmus demanded tribute of the larger communities, commanding them to send him "willing" victims to receive his blessing and bolster the ranks of his spawn. Eventually, word of the cleric's heinous deeds spread across the land until at last the church of Pelor sent a champion to stop his predations.

The champion, a paladin named Arne, traveled with her companions to Rasmus's profaned mountain temple. There, Arne and her company battled the vampire and his brood until the paladin's bright blade pierced the cleric's heart. The blow should have destroyed Rasmus, but his power was so great that he fought on, mortally wounding Pelor's champion. With the last of her strength, Arne chopped off the vampire's head, and when his body fell she cut the heart out of his chest.

Realizing the monster was beyond her power to destroy, Arne bade her companions to separate the three parts of Rasmus's body, fix them in place, and anoint them with her blood to bind the vampire's spirit. The companions did so, staking Rasmus's corpse down with Arne's blade, weighting his tongue with her holy symbol, wrapping his heart in her cloak, and anointing them all with the paladin's blood. They then buried Arne at the foot of the mountain's slope and erected a small shrine to her memory.

As the tale of her heroism spread, pilgrims flocked to the shrine and built a chapel on the site named Arne's Rest, where an order of penitents settled to tend her grave and minister to the faithful. The order had another, secret duty—to watch over Rasmus's remains to ensure that they were never disturbed, and to guard the last of the holy blood that had been collected from Arne as she lay dying in case it would ever be needed again. Over the course of generations, a town sprang up in the valley below the chapel; it was named Arnesbloom after the scarlet flowers that lined the banks of the nearby river.

Cult of Orcus

Recently, a group of cultists came to Arnesbloom searching for the Raven Queen's forsaken temple, hoping to claim it for their demonic lord, Orcus. They were followed by an adventuring company called the Ironhearts, one of whom—the paladin Anja Silvermane—was once an acolyte in the chapel and feared what might happen if the cultists discovered the vampire's hidden remains.

The Ironhearts arrived in Arnesbloom just as the cult completed a ritual that slew every living soul in the town, including the hapless adventurers. The cult offered the souls to Orcus, who caused them to rise again as ghouls. But when the cultists tried to bend these undead to their will, the risen members of the Ironhearts resisted and rallied the townsfolk against their murderers. Some of the ghouls fell under the sway of the cultists, but many more fought back, and their mass proved overwhelming. After losing nearly half their number in the initial onslaught, the remaining cultists fled to the only available refuge—the sanctuary of Arne's Rest.

The magic of the chapel's sanctuary had protected its inhabitants from the ritual, so the cultists faced more opposition from the acolytes living there, and several more followers of Orcus died in the ensuing battle. The cultists eventually won out, slaughtering most of the acolytes and torturing the rest for information. Only one of the acolytes escaped, bearing the sacred blood of Arne up the mountain path to Rasmus's long-forgotten temple. In the days that followed, the cultists learned of the vampire's hidden remains and discovered that their ritual had weakened the bonds on his spirit. The cult's leader formulated a new plot to use Rasmus to gain control over the people of Arnesbloom.

The risen townsfolk could not pursue the cultists onto the chapel's hallowed ground, so they returned to Arnesbloom to try to make sense of their cursed existence. The Ironhearts, intent on redeeming their failure to protect the town, took up the burden of leading the new population of undead. They exhorted the townsfolk to resist the evil of Orcus and to work to reclaim what they could of their shattered lives. With no alternative other than despair, the townsfolk set themselves grimly to the task.

Their first act, in sardonic acknowledgment of their new identity, was to rename the town Dead Haven. The town's attempt at a new "life" is imperiled by the presence of the slain cultists, who have also risen as ghouls and insinuated themselves into the population. They seek to undermine the Ironhearts and bring the townsfolk back under the cult's control.

Synopsis

The heroes are sent to Arnesbloom by the local sheriff to investigate reports that the town has been overrun by undead. Near the valley's border, they are attacked by ghouls from Dead Haven but aided in their fight by a member of the Ironhearts. The heroes learn of the town's plight and of the struggle to maintain order in the face of the continual threat posed by the cult of Orcus. The heroes most likely continue on to Dead Haven, where they meet the leader of the Ironhearts and learn more about the group's plan to rebuild the town. The Ironhearts beseech the party to travel to Arne's Rest and put an end to the cult's plot to revive the spirit of the vampire Rasmus.

When the heroes arrive at Arne's Rest, they find that the leader of the cult has implanted Rasmus's heart in his own chest to absorb the vampire's power. After the characters confront the cult leader, they must retrieve Arne's relics and travel to the profaned temple, where they contend with the vampire's vengeful spirit and a despairing paladin who believes that the inhabitants of Dead Haven are beyond salvation. If the heroes win through, they have the opportunity to bind the vampire's spirit again—or perhaps banish it forever—and to decide the fate of the people of Dead Haven.

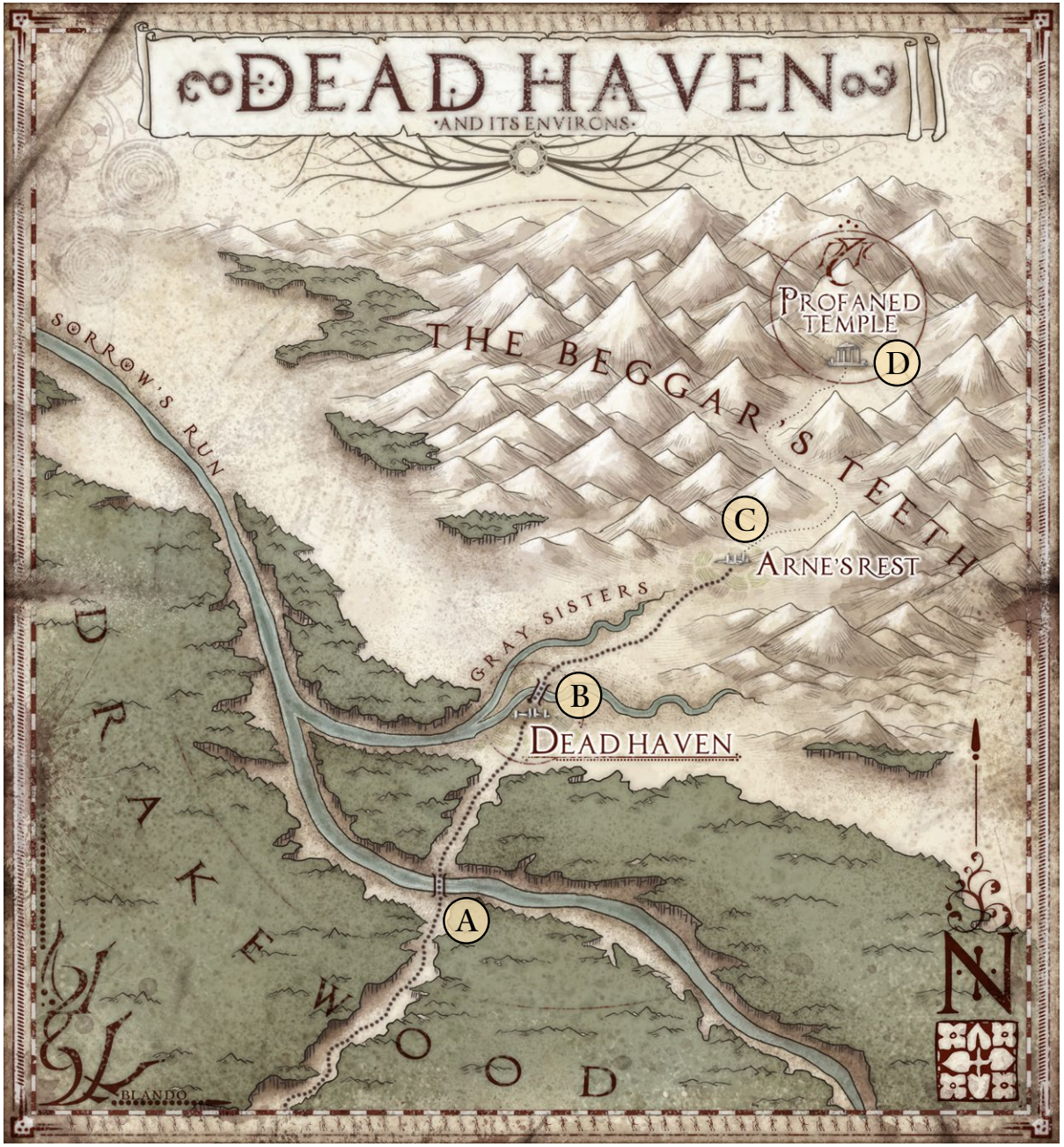
Adventure Hooks

The following are a few possible hooks you can use to help tie the characters into the story and give the heroes a personal stake in the adventure.

Acolyte of the Order: One of the characters was an acolyte in the chapel of Arne's Rest before being called to adventure. The character knows the history of Arne's battle with Rasmus and might also know the resting places of one or more part of the vampire's remains. The character is keen to investigate the appearance of undead in Arnesbloom, afraid that it might be the work of the vampire's restless spirit.

Friends in Need: One of the characters is a friend or relation of one of the Ironhearts. Alternatively, the party might have encountered the Ironhearts as allies during a previous adventure. In any case, a message has arrived from the Ironhearts asking the characters for aid. The message mentions the run-in the Ironhearts had with the cult of Orcus, though not the aftermath. (The Ironhearts don't want to reveal that they are now undead for fear of scaring the heroes out of coming.)

On the Trail of the Cult: One of the characters is a member of a temple or other order that has an interest in stamping out the cult of Orcus. The character has been tasked to follow up on rumors of recent cult activity in Arnesbloom. Alternatively, the party might have discovered that this group of cultists was responsible for the presence of undead in one of its previous adventures and tracked them to Dead Haven to end their depredations.



Preparing the Adventure

Arne's relics—her blade, symbol, and cloak—are magic items that play a key role in this adventure. Mechanically, they provide one possible way for the heroes to defeat the unkillable vampire.

In addition to the relics, the adventure has about one level's worth of treasure on the presumption that the heroes leave Arne's blade, symbol, and cloak behind at the end. If they hold onto the relics, that's fine—the items' powers manifest only when facing Rasmus and otherwise operate as common +2 magic items. You might wish to account for their extra value when placing treasure in subsequent adventures.

This adventure uses locations featured in the "Haunted Temples" map pack.

Beginning the Adventure

The town of Dead Haven is situated in a small, isolated vale bordered by woodlands to the south and hills to the north. For the purposes of this adventure, the vale sits along the outskirts of the barony of Reddark, but it can be inserted easily into whatever setting you're using. Although much of the story is tied to figures in the standard pantheon (specifically Pelor, the Raven Queen, and Orcus), you can modify the story by substituting references to other gods or powers of their respective domains (Sun, Death, and the undead).

The adventure begins when the party is hired by the sheriff of Reddark (or his functional equivalent in your setting) to investigate reports of undead in Arnesbloom.

Read:

The sheriff of Reddark, a grizzled and thick-waisted dwarf named Grimbol, stands before you, wringing his hands and clearing his throat.

"Hrmm. Greetings, heroes, and thank for you heeding my summons. Reports have reached me of a, hmmm, a disturbance in the remote town of Arnesbloom. Seems the townsfolk there are having trouble with undead. Well, to be precise, the reports said the town had been "overrun." But then, nobody's gotten close enough to really find out! Ahem. Well, what with trying to keep the roads clear of monsters and brigands, my people have their hands full. I need you to investigate these reports, find out what's really going on up there, and if there's trouble in the town, make sure it doesn't spill out into the rest of the region."

Grimbol coughs nervously and mops his face with his sleeve. "If the situation is as grim as these reports imply it is, you might find a lot of undead in Arnesbloom. If you reckon you can clean them out, fine, but if not, just do whatever you can to keep them from spreading. You'll be well compensated for your risk."

Sheriff Grimbol offers the party a reward of 2,000 gold pieces if they can contain the threat that the undead in Arnesbloom pose to the barony. As the party will learn, this means ensuring that the population of Dead Haven does not fall under the sway of the cult of Orcus or the risen spirit of Rasmus. (The heroes can achieve this and earn the reward at least three different ways; see "Concluding the Adventure" for detailed examples.)

Grimbol doesn't know any more about the events in Dead Haven than what he's related. He can provide directions to the town and the fact that it lies near an old chapel dedicated to some hero of the faithful (with a DC 15 Religion check, characters can recall the chapel's name and its connection to the church of Pelor). After characters make whatever preparations they see fit, proceed to "The Bridge at Sorrow's Run."

A. The Bridge at Sorrow's Run

The river of Sorrow's Run marks the southern border of the land settled by the people of Arnesbloom. South of the river, the woods are thick and wild and populated by all manner of beasts. North of the river, the woods are silent; all the animals have fled.

Although most of Dead Haven's inhabitants heed the Ironhearts' instructions to stay out of the forest, a few ghouls have succumbed to their hunger for flesh. At the urging of the undead cultists, these ghouls patrol the river to ambush careless woodsmen and travelers. One of the reports Sheriff Grimbol received was from a survivor of one such ambush.

The river is also patrolled by Alwar Thornwhistle, a half-elf ranger and member of the Ironhearts. He discovered the remains of some of the ghouls' victims and seeks to warn other travelers before they meet the same fate. (It was Alwar who told Grimbol's scout that Arnesbloom had been "overrun" by undead. The scout never got close enough to see that the ranger was one of them.)

Read:

After spending the better part of the day hiking north through the Drakewood, you come to a swift-running stream that cuts across your path. Its churning waters are spanned by a gently arched wooden bridge that looks sturdy despite its obvious age. A signpost standing at the near end of the bridge points the way across; deep gouges in the wood partially obscure the name "Arnesbloom" painted in flowing black script. Below this, another sign has been nailed to the post; on it, crudely scrawled in reddish-brown ink, are the words "Dead Haven."

Perception DC 10: *Broken bones lie scattered amid the rocks at the water's edge.*

Heal DC 15: *The bones are human and no more than a week old. They've been chewed, cracked, and stripped of their marrow.*

Attack at the Bridge

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,100 XP)

These roving ghouls are intent on making the heroes their next meal. Alwar, meanwhile, does his best to help the party fight off the attackers.

Monsters: 1 ghoul ambusher (A), Alwar Thornwhistle (T), 4 ravenous ghouls (R).

Read:
A man's voice calls out from somewhere across the bridge. "You should not have come here, travelers. This place no longer belongs to the living. Leave while you still can." No sooner does he speak than you hear the rustling of dry leaves in the forest all around you, along with a chorus of low, malevolent hisses. The voice's owner, a green-cloaked figure with a longbow in hand, emerges from the foliage near the far end of the bridge and turns his hooded face toward you. "I fear my warning comes too late. Ready your blades; the undead approach!"

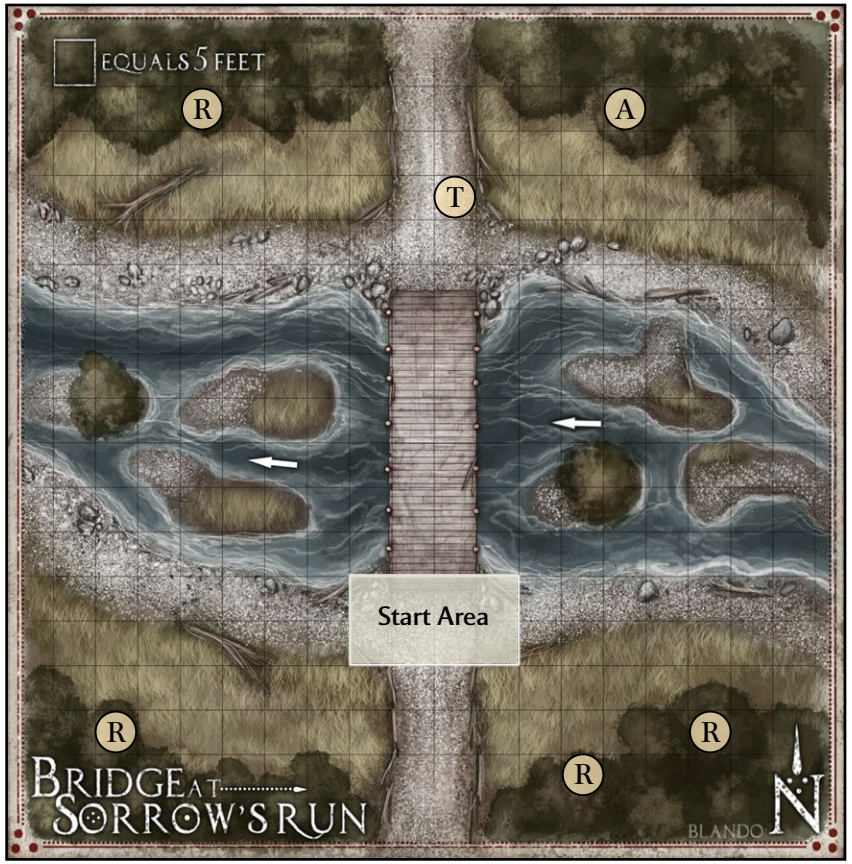
The ghouls begin the encounter out of sight in the thick foliage, although they're not hidden. They go into a frenzy at the smell of live prey and attack relentlessly, fighting to the death. They prefer to feed on living flesh, so they attack Alwar only if they cannot reach the heroes.

Alwar tries to help the heroes fight off the ghouls. He regrets having to attack townsfolk, but he'd rather save people who are still alive than spare those who have succumbed to the curse of Orcus. Although he fights as the heroes' ally, Alwar is still subject to attacks that target all undead within an area, potentially revealing his true nature.

Trees: Squares of forest are heavily obscuring, as well as being rough terrain.

Water: The stream is shallow enough to ford—only 2 feet deep in its center—but the swiftness of the current is enough to knock a person prone. All squares of water are rough terrain, and any Medium or smaller creature that enters or starts its turn in a water square that is not adjacent to the shore must succeed on a DC 15 Athletics check or fall prone and slide 1 square in the direction of the current.

After the ghouls have been defeated, read:
The man in the green cloak turns and salutes you. "Well fought! I mistook you for common travelers, but obviously you did not come here unprepared. I am Alwar Thornwhistle of the Ironheart company, and I think you might be just what the people of Dead Haven so desperately need. You should come to town and speak with our leader, Ilse."



The heroes can learn the following pieces of information through conversation with Alwar, although he prefers to talk while en route to town. He doesn't want to tarry for fear of another attack by roving ghouls.

- The Ironhearts came to Arnesbloom in pursuit of a cult of Orcus, but they arrived too late. All the town's inhabitants had been slain and had risen as ghouls.
- The Ironhearts turned the ghouls against their masters and drove the cultists into hiding.
- The Ironhearts have been helping the townsfolk to reclaim something of their former lives in an effort to keep them from being consumed by evil.
- The heroes can expect safe passage in Dead Haven. To help combat the evil of their cursed nature, the townsfolk take pains not to indulge their craving for flesh.
- Not all of the townsfolk resisted the corrupting evil of their transformation into undead. Some of them fled with the cultists, while others rove about the countryside looking for prey. It was one of these groups that attacked the heroes on the bridge.

Alwar tries to conceal the fact that he and the other Ironhearts are also undead. He doesn't want to frighten off the heroes before they have a chance to meet Ilse and see that the people of Dead Haven are truly intent on living peaceably. He tries to deflect any casual suspicions the characters might voice, but if cornered he admits the truth.

Read:

Alwar reaches up to his hood and, hesitantly, pulls it back, revealing a gruesome visage. Bloodshot eyes look out at you from behind a mask of sickly green. The fetid skin sloughs off in places to reveal the muscle beneath. His cracked lips are drawn tight and his gums have shriveled away, locking Alwar's countenance into a horrific grin. His next words confirm your suspicions.

"We are, all of us," he says, "undead."

Ghoul Ambusher **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 300

HP 81; **Bloodied** 40 **Initiative** +10
AC 21, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17 **Perception** +9
Speed 8, climb 4 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claws ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the ghoul grabs the target.

⸸ **Mouthful of Flesh ✦ At-Will**
Requirement: The target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Move Actions

Bounding Leap ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: The target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Invisibility (illusion) **✦ At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The ghoul jumps up to 8 squares. A ghoul can expend this power as a free action during a charge to jump up to 8 squares in place of moving normally. If it does so and hits, the target falls prone in addition to the attack's results.

Triggered Actions

⸸ **Worry ✦ At-Will**
Trigger: A grabbed creature attempts to escape.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.

Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +13
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Alwar Thornwhistle **Level 5 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (undead), half-elf XP 200

HP 51; **Bloodied** 25 **Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 6 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claws ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

➳ **Longbow** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of Alwar's next turn.

➳ **Rapid Shot** (weapon) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 10 (one, two, or three creatures); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 2 damage.

Skills Nature +8, Stealth +11
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Alignment good **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, longbow

4 Ravenous Ghouls **Level 5 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

HP 76; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +4
AC 17, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 **Perception** +1
Speed 8, climb 4 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claws ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage.

⸸ **Ravenous Bite ✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Skills Stealth +9
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+1)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

B. Dead Haven

When the characters arrive in Dead Haven, they find its inhabitants engaged in a strange facsimile of normal life. Although the cult's ritual caused no destruction, the mood about town is the somberness of a population recovering from war or disaster.

Read:

As you approach Dead Haven, you see townsfolk in the street going about their daily business and farmers in the field driving their plows. The image of normalcy crumbles as you get closer. The people here look like plague victims, their skin pallid and gray, their hair falling out in clumps, yet they are seemingly indifferent to their condition. They watch you silently as you approach, their gazes ranging from envious to pleading to hopeless. A few lick their mouths with long, swollen tongues as you pass. One woman gnaws at her lip, while another scoops up a handful of dirt and shoves it in her mouth, chewing hungrily, never taking her eyes off you.

More disturbing still is the hush that hangs over the town. The men do not grumble and curse as they go about their labors, neighbors do not gossip when they meet in the street, and children play silently at their games, neither laughing nor crying. The only voice you hear is a woman's, coming from the town square. Dressed in finely worked leather and chain armor, with a sword at her hip, she seems to be giving directions to some of the townsfolk. When she notices your approach, the woman breaks off her conversation and faces you. She, too, is afflicted by the same corruption as the rest of the town.

Alwar speaks up. "Allow me to introduce Lady Ilse Ironheart."

At this point, if the party hasn't already figured it out, Alwar reveals that he, too, is undead and apologizes for his duplicity. After that, he allows Ilse to do the talking.

Lady Ilse Ironheart

Ilse is a human noble who once had a minor holding in the barony of Reddark. Preferring adventure to administration, she ceded her lands to her younger brother and formed her current company, with which she has been through several adventures. Ilse is used to giving orders and having them obeyed, and the other members of the Ironhearts respect her leadership. Her companions refer to her simply as Ilse, though everyone else calls her Lady Ironheart to her face, or just "The Lady" in her absence.

The party can gain the following additional pieces of information by speaking with Lady Ironheart.

- The Ironhearts arrived in Arnesbloom before the cultists of Orcus completed their ritual, but they were too late to stop it. They were transformed into ghouls along with all the townsfolk.
- After they were driven off by the townsfolk, the cultists fled to the chapel of Arne's Rest (which is visible from the edge of town, situated on a hill to the northeast).
- The townsfolk could not pursue the cultists into the chapel, since its hallowed grounds are too painful for them to cross. The cultists' undead minions seemed bolstered by their master's presence and went with them into the chapel.
- No one has heard from the acolytes of the chapel; they are presumed dead.
- Some of the cultists were killed during the initial confrontation and have since risen as ghouls themselves. Ilse discovered one who had infiltrated the town, and she believes there may be more.
- In addition to Ilse and Alwar, the Ironheart company boasts three other members: Falling Rain, an elf druid; Confidence, a tiefling wizard; and Anja Silvermane, an eladrin paladin of Pelor.
- Falling Rain is helping the townsfolk to grow mushrooms in the fields. (The cult's ritual killed

What If the Party Doesn't Go to Dead Haven?

Going to Dead Haven gives the heroes a chance to interact with the other members of the Ironhearts, and it gives the players a chance to see what their characters are fighting for. It also gives them a sense of the threat the cult poses to the town's stability.

The players might balk at the idea of having their characters walk into a town full of undead. If that's the case—or if you just want to get the players right into the action—you can have Alwar provide them with the information and quests they would otherwise have gleaned from speaking with the other Ironhearts. The party can then proceed directly to Arne's Rest.

- "For Argramos! Wait—no . . ."
- "I live . . . but why? Why?"
- "Slay the undead! No! Slay the invaders!"
- "Why do I fight . . . I can't remember . . ."

Clever players might have their characters knock enemies unconscious, in which case the soulmerged undead that rises will be even more confused (dazed, save ends).

When a soulmerged undead dies for the second time, portray a knight glad to be released:

- "I'm free! Free of this undead horror!"
- "Tell Lord Argramos we tried . . ."
- "Even now, the necromancer cannot win."
- "Oblivion is better than this . . ."
- "I'm free! Free of this cursed existence!"
- "I fight because I must . . ."

Characters can converse with the soulmerged undead, but such conversations are brief. The undead are hostile (at least the freshly dead souls within them) and want to wreak revenge on their slayers.

all the crops, and mushrooms are the only thing that will grow now.) The people of Dead Haven eat the mushrooms in an effort to assuage their appetite for flesh, though it doesn't work very well.

- Confidence is trying to devise a ritual that will undo the transformation wrought by the cultists and restore the townsfolk to life. (Ilse pitches her voice low when she relates this information; she doesn't think there's much chance of Confidence's plan working, and she doesn't want the townsfolk pinning their hopes on a miracle.)
- Anja Silvermane was the only person who pursued the cultists into the chapel. She, too, was turned into a ghoul, but Ilse surmises that Anja's faith shielded her from the pain of the hallowed ground; either that, or it gave her the will to endure it. She never returned, and nobody knows what became of her.
- Before she left, Anja told Ilse that the chapel contained the remains of a powerful vampire named Rasmus, whom she believed the cultists were trying to revive.

Ilse asks the heroes to help the people of Dead Haven by stopping the cult's plot to revive Rasmus. With such a powerful ally, the cult would have little trouble defeating the Ironhearts and subjugating the rest of the town. Although the cultists who have infiltrated the town are also a concern, Ilse is confident she can root them out in time.

Ilse makes plain the fact that the people of Dead Haven are now under her care and that she is intent on finding a way for them to live peaceably. Although she abandoned her birthright years ago, she tells the party that she would gladly renew her vow of fealty to Reddark as the Lady of Dead Haven, paying tithes and guaranteeing the safe conduct of her citizens, if the heroes can stop the cult's plot from coming to fruition.

The heroes gain the following quest.

MAJOR QUEST: PREVENT RASMUS'S REVIVAL
5th-Level Major Quest
(100 or 200 XP/Character)
The heroes don't know it, but they're too late to stop the cult from freeing Rasmus's spirit. The vampire's revival will not be complete until he consumes the blood of his old enemy, Arne, which the heroes *can* prevent. If the heroes use Arne's blood to destroy the vampire's spirit or bind it with Arne's relics, they earn 200 XP per character. If the heroes prevent Rasmus from drinking the blood but allow his spirit to remain free (most likely because they intend to use the blood to fulfill Confidence's quest), the characters earn only 100 XP each for this quest.

Ilse also suggests that the heroes talk to Confidence and Falling Rain before traveling to the chapel, since they might have need of the party's help with their own endeavors. Confidence has set up a study in one of the rooms at the local inn, and Falling Rain spends most of his time out in the fields.

Confidence

Confidence, as his moniker implies, is a wizard with a peerless estimation of his own abilities. Although his skill with magic is impressive, the tiefling's natural optimism and penchant for understating risks often gets him and his companions into trouble. As a result, the other Ironhearts take everything the wizard says with a healthy dose of skepticism.

If the characters seek out Confidence, read:
As you peer through the half-open door of the inn, you see a tiefling dressed in lavender-and-gold robes. He sits in the common room with his booted feet propped up on a nearby table, a small leather book in his hand. His grayish skin shows some of the same signs of corruption as the other townsfolk, though the effect isn't as pronounced. When he notices your presence, he cocks an eyebrow and smiles, eagerly beckoning you to join him.

Perception DC 19: *You catch a flicker of movement under a nearby table, but when you turn to see what it is, nothing is there.*

Confidence informs the heroes that he has discovered a ritual to restore the townsfolk to life. It requires a reagent he can't get his hands on: the blood of Arne. Now that the characters are here, the tiefling figures they can go to the chapel and get the blood for him. What could go wrong?

The heroes gain the following quest.

MINOR QUEST: HELP CONFIDENCE COMPLETE HIS RITUAL
5th-Level Minor Quest (100 XP/Character)
If the characters bring Confidence the blood of Arne, they earn 100 XP per character.

Despite Confidence's easy swagger, the heroes might not trust him entirely, especially if they noticed the creature hiding under the table. Make an Insight check for any character who wishes to scrutinize the tiefling.

Insight DC 10: *You feel assured of Confidence's good intentions.*

Insight DC 15: *Although Confidence isn't lying, there's something about the ritual he isn't telling you.*

Insight DC 22: *Beneath his bravado, you can tell that the tiefling is worried about something.*

The truth is that Confidence knew the task he had set himself was beyond his abilities, so in the secrecy of his study, he contacted a being from the Nine Hells and made a bargain to gain access to the ritual. If he succeeds, his soul will be forfeit to the entity that granted him the ritual, but Confidence figures that without it, his soul is damned anyway. He'd rather take his chances trying to wriggle out of a deal with a devil

than spend eternity as one of the undead. The creature hiding under the table is the imp that delivered the ritual scroll to Confidence, and it has stayed to keep an eye on the wizard on behalf of its infernal master.

None of that is what worries the tiefling, though. Instead, ever since he obtained the ritual, he has been wondering this: If the blood of Arne is powerful enough to restore the undead to life, what fell purpose might the cultists put it to if they get hold of it first?

Falling Rain

Quaitheth'Riul is the name of the elf druid who travels with the Ironhearts; translated into Common, his name means "falling rain," so that is what his companions have taken to calling him. Hailing from a remote elven enclave far from the trappings of civilization, Falling Rain has a very different view of the world than the others do. In fact, he doesn't even consider himself one of the group. Whenever anyone refers to him as a member of the Ironhearts, he corrects them, insisting that he simply travels *with* the Ironhearts. Most people, including his companions, don't see the difference.

If the characters seek out Falling Rain, read:
Amid the ghoulish farmers bent over their plows, you see one figure standing straight in the center of the field. He holds a gnarled staff at arm's length and wears a wolf pelt across his shoulders, his chestnut hair falling in long braids down his back. Every so often he calls out to one of the farmers, who leaves off plowing to tend to the furrows in the soil.

Although obviously subject to the same corruption as the other people here, the lone figure holds himself with a pride and dignity unmatched even by the other Ironhearts. If he sees you, he gives no sign of it.

Falling Rain is intent on his work and does not break away from it to speak with the heroes. If they approach him, the elf returns their greetings and answers any questions they ask of him, but he rarely expounds on a topic and often answers questions with another question.

If the characters ask how they can help, read:
"Ilse says the people here despair because they are dead, but do they not also live? If they despair, it is because they see death all around them, and forget that they are alive. We must bring life back to this place, so the people may see it and forget that they are dead.

"But how does one bring life to dead soil? Can even the purest of waters wash away evil's stain? Do elves know the answers to such questions?"

The heroes gain the following quest.

MINOR QUEST: HELP FALLING RAIN RESTORE LIFE TO THE FIELDS
5th-Level Minor Quest (40 XP/Character)

If the characters bring Falling Rain purified water from the fountain in area C5, they earn 40 XP each.

Shadows of the Cult

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

One of the undead cultists who has infiltrated Dead Haven overhears the heroes' plans to help the Ironhearts, and he stages an attack on the party with the aid of some of the more easily controlled townsfolk. You can use this encounter at any time while the party is in Dead Haven or en route to or from the chapel. The cultist tries to ambush the party in a relatively isolated area such as inside a building or far out in the fields, where the attack won't draw the attention of the other townsfolk.

Monsters: 4 ravenous ghouls, 1 adept of Orcus.

When the ghouls attack, read:

As the ghouls close in, you notice that one of them urges the others on, clutching an iron symbol of what looks like a ram's skull in its claws.

The creature hisses at you. "Your efforts to save these wretched people are wasted. Sooner or later they will all succumb to the hunger that consumes them, and their souls will be chattel for the demon prince of undeath!"

The adept's aim is not so much to kill the heroes as to demoralize them. It wants them to believe that the people of Dead Haven are truly lost, and it lords its control of the ghouls over the characters as proof that the townsfolk have been corrupted. As the fight progresses, the adept continues to sow seeds of doubt about the people's ability to withstand the corruption, and it taunts the party with predictions of the cult's inevitable triumph.

The adept tries to flee if reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, hoping to recover its strength and then harry the party further. The ghouls go into a frenzy after battle is joined and continue to fight even if the adept flees or is destroyed.

Development: If the heroes report this attack to Ilse, she thanks them for dispatching one of the infiltrators and reassures the characters that the people of Dead Haven mean them no harm. Only the evil influence of the cultists drives the townsfolk to attack.

If the heroes tarry too long during any point of the adventure, feel free to have another ambush like this one to remind the party of the threat posed by the cult. Conversely, if the heroes take time away from the main quest to root out the rest of the cultists in Dead Haven, you can arrange a skill challenge using Insight, Perception, and Streetwise checks as the party scours the town. Intersperse the checks with more encounters like this one, and culminate with a showdown at the cultists' secret shrine in the slaughterhouse, where the adepts gorge themselves on the town's remaining meats.

Adept of Orcus **Level 6 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (undead), ghoul XP 250

HP 71; **Bloodied** 35 **Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 **Perception** +5
Speed 8 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Traits

☼ **Uneasy Grave ✦ Aura** 5
Any nonminion ghoul ally within the aura that drops to 0 hit points becomes a zombie rotter (*Monster Manual*, page 274) at the start of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⨭ **Claw ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⚚ **Grave Grasp** (implement) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is restrained (save ends).

⚚ **Call to Feast** (implement) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. Will
Hit: The target is immobilized (save ends). One of the adept's allies that is adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.

✲ **Grave Dust Cloud** (implement, necrotic, zone) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (living creatures in the burst); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any living creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes 5 necrotic damage.

Skills Religion +9, Stealth +12
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 17 (+6)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Equipment rod, holy symbol of Orcus

4 Ravenous Ghouls **Level 5 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

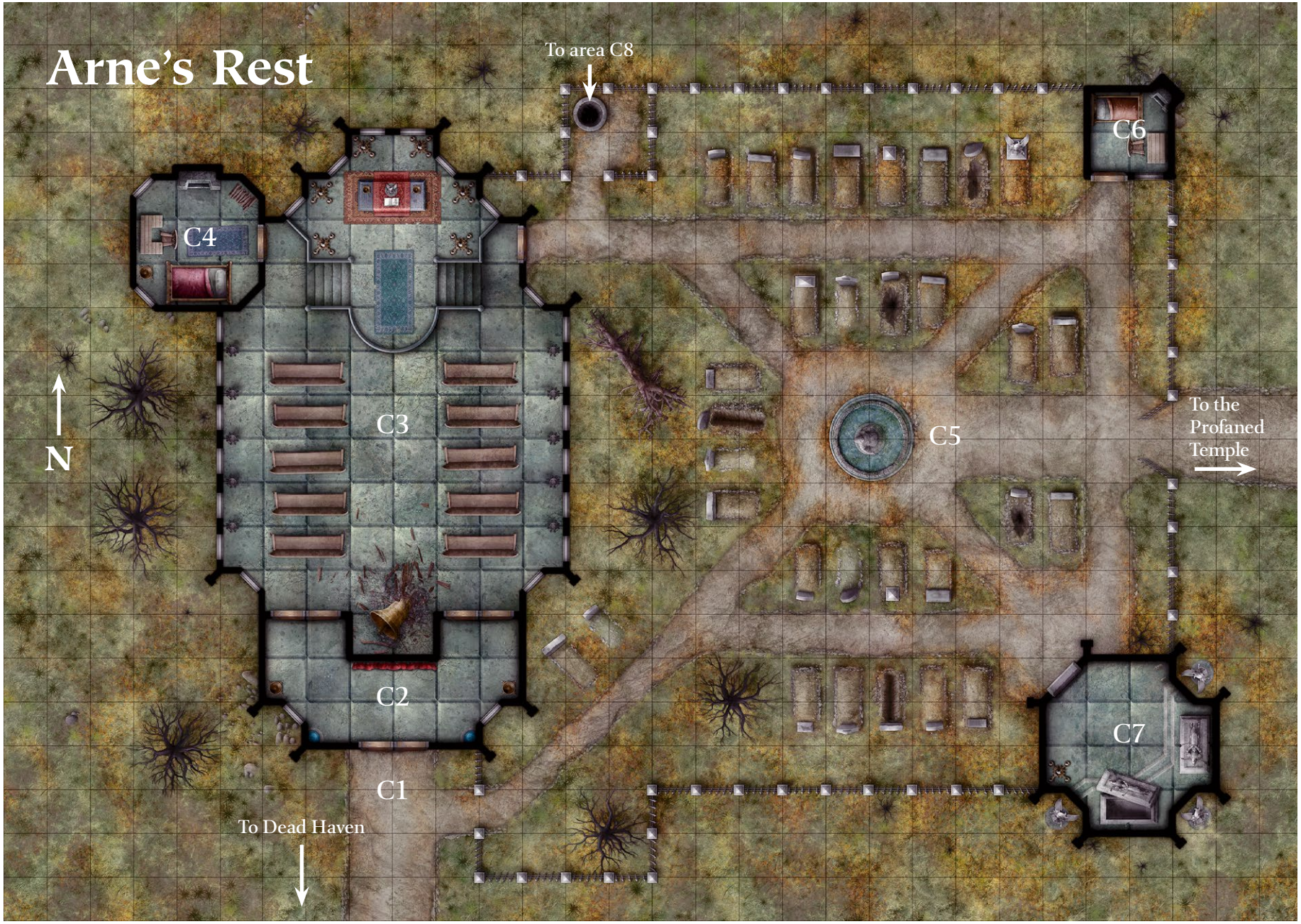
HP 76; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +4
AC 17, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 **Perception** +1
Speed 8, climb 4 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

⨭ **Claws ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage.

⸸ **Ravenous Bite ✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Skills Stealth +9
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+1)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common


Arne's Rest
To area C8
C6
C4
C3
C5
To the Profaned Temple
N
C2
C7
C1
To Dead Haven

C. Arne's Rest

The remnants of the cult of Orcus are holed up in the abbey of Arne's Rest, where their leader, a deathpriest of Orcus, has just finished implanting the heart of Rasmus in his own chest in hopes of claiming the vampire's power. After confronting the deathpriest and inadvertently loosing Rasmus's spirit, the heroes can learn more about the events that have transpired here from the chapel's priest, Father Ulter, as well as how Rasmus can be defeated. They can also seek out Arne's relics, which have been hidden throughout the abbey's grounds, to aid them in their eventual confrontation with Rasmus.

Refer to the map of Arne's Rest and the Underground Cave for the following location descriptions. The abbey's interior rooms (areas C2–C4) all share the following characteristics.

Doors: All the doors in these areas are simple wooden doors and are unlocked.

Hallowed Ground: Undead creatures that enter or start their turn anywhere in these areas take 5 psychic damage. Undead within 10 squares of an allied underpriest of Orcus or deathpriest of Orcus are immune to this effect.

Light: All these areas are brightly lit by torches on the walls.

C1. Entrance

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,100 XP)

An underpriest of Orcus and a pair of ghouls guard the main entrance to the chapel, while two bands of cultists patrol the perimeter.

Monsters: 1 underpriest of Orcus, 2 ghouls, 8 cultists of Orcus.

Read:

As you approach Arne's Rest, you see lights dancing in the chapel's stained glass windows, and a trio of figures standing guard at the front doors. A tall wrought-iron fence extends from the chapel's eastern face, demarking a large yard, and inside you can make out the movement of several more figures.

Perception DC 15: *You spy movement around the far end of the courtyard. Two groups of dark-robed figures patrol the chapel's perimeter.*

If the heroes approach from the road, they encounter the underpriest and ghouls first, with four of the cultists joining the battle at the beginning of the second round and the other four at the beginning of the third round.

If the heroes approach the chapel from another direction, they encounter one of the groups of cultists first, with the underpriest and the ghouls appearing at the beginning of the second round, and the remaining cultists at the beginning of the third round.

The underpriest knows that the deathpriest in area C3 has already begun his dark rite, and he fights to the death to prevent the heroes from interfering. If the underpriest falls, one of the remaining cultists tries to flee to area C3 to warn the creatures there of the party's approach. The ghouls fight to the death.

Fences: The fence surrounding area C5 stands 8 feet high and requires a DC 10 Athletics check and 2 extra squares of movement to climb over. Medium creatures can squeeze through the bars with a DC 15 Acrobatics check for only 1 extra square of movement; small creatures can forgo the check, although they must still spend the extra square of movement to squeeze. The fence provides cover to creatures behind it against attacks originating from the opposite side. Although the fence does not block line of sight, the creatures in area C5 are too busy feeding to be bothered with any altercation taking place outside. They join the encounter only if attacked or if the characters enter their area.

Underpriest of Orcus **Level 6 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 250

HP 71; **Bloodied** 35 — **Initiative** +5
AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +5
Speed 5

Traits

Closer to Orcus
While bloodied, the underpriest can score a critical hit on a natural 19 or 20.

Standard Actions

Mace (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Shadow Curse (implement, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends).

Minor Actions

Infuse with Shadow (healing, implement) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Effect: An undead ally within 5 squares of the underpriest regains 10 hit points.

Skills Religion +9

Str 12 (+4)	**Dex** 14 (+5)	**Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	**Int** 12 (+4)	**Cha** 18 (+7)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, mace, holy symbol of Orcus

2 Ghouls	Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 200 each
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31	**Initiative** +8
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16	**Perception** +2
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic	
Traits	
Weakened Paralysis	
Whenever the ghoul takes radiant damage, one creature immobilized or stunned by the ghoul can make a saving throw against one of those effects.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claws ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⸸ **Ghoulish Bite ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)	
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common	

C2. Antechamber

This room is unadorned except for a tapestry on the central wall. It is currently deserted.

When the heroes enter area C2, read:

The chapel's antechamber is lit by a pair of torches mounted in sconces, their flames dancing brightly in the stained glass windows. A large tapestry in the center of the wall depicts a female warrior doing battle with a male cleric, blood pouring from a wound in her side. A set of double doors stands to either side of the tapestry, leading into the sanctuary. In the corner, the body of young man dressed in novice's robes lies torn and bloody.

Perception DC 10: *The sound of chanting comes from the room beyond.*

Religion DC 10: *The cleric in the tapestry wears the trappings of a follower of the Raven Queen.*

8 Cultists of Orcus	Level 6 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 63 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7	
AC 20, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Sacrificial Knife** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 damage, or 10 if the target is immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious.	
Triggered Actions	
Death's Swift Approach ✦ At-Will	
Trigger: An attack misses the cultist.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The cultist shifts up to half its speed.	
Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+2)	
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment sacrificial knife	

C3. Sanctuary

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,525 XP)

The deathpriest who leads the cultists found the heart of Rasmus and conducted an unholy rite to implant it in his chest to absorb the power of the vampire's spirit. The heroes arrive moments after the ceremony is completed.

Monsters: 1 deathpriest of Orcus, 1 quasit, 2 ghouls, ghoul flesh seeker, 4 cultists of Orcus.

When the heroes enter area C3, read:

Rows of wooden pews line the chapel's sanctuary, and at the chamber's far end a short flight of stairs rises up to an altar, with doors leading off to either side. The entire chamber is lit by the glow of torches reflected in the series of stained glass windows lining the walls.

Standing before the altar, four cultists are chanting in unison. Two of them hold knives dripping with gore, while the other two support a man wearing a ram's skull on his head, and whose black robes are stripped to the waist. A fresh wound is visible on his breast, but even as you watch, the wound begins to close over.

Perception DC 16: *A pair of ghouls crouches amid the pews, watching the ceremony with zeal.*

Perception DC 23: *A tiny, green, malformed humanoid crouches behind the altar, surreptitiously watching the proceedings.*

When the deathpriest notices the heroes, read:

The man wearing the ram's skull lets out a cruel laugh.

"Once again, the enemies of Orcus come too late. The heart of Rasmus now beats in my chest. His power lives within me, and with it I will bring this land under Orcus's dark dominion!"

The creatures here attack as soon as they notice the heroes. The ghoul flesh seeker is hiding in area C4 when combat begins; it rolls initiative as normal, but do not place it on the map until it attacks or one of the heroes enters that area.

Pews: The pews are difficult terrain and provide cover to creatures in their space.

Altar: The altar is difficult terrain and requires a DC 10 Athletics check to move through. It provides cover to creatures behind it from attacks originating from the other side.

Bell: The ghouls have smashed the mounting in the chapel's bell tower, sending the bell and a fair bit of debris tumbling to the floor. These squares are difficult terrain, and the bell provides cover to creatures standing behind it.

Stairs: The stairs ascend 5 feet to the level of the altar. They are difficult terrain.

Stained Glass: The stained glass windows depict the story recounted in the "Adventure Background" section.

Heart of Rasmus: In addition to the abilities noted in his stat block, the deathpriest of Orcus gains the following benefits from the heart of Rasmus.

Heart of Rasmus — Heroic Level

Rasmus was a cleric of the Raven Queen who used his power to seek immortality, a search that corrupted him and transformed him into a vampire. His black and twisted heart still beats with a portion of that corrupt power.

Artifact: Wondrous Item

Property

While holding the heart, the deathpriest regains 5 hit points whenever he starts his turn and has at least 1 hit point.

Attack Power (Healing, Necrotic) ✦ **Encounter** (Standard Action)

Attack: Melee 1 (one living creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The deathpriest regains a number of hit points equal to the damage dealt.

Treasure: A level 8 magic item is stored inside the altar, along with a pair of silver candlesticks worth 50 gp.

Development: If the deathpriest falls unconscious, the ghouls begin to take damage from the hallowed ground effect. They fight until bloodied, then flee to area C5. The cultists fight to the death.

The round after the deathpriest drops to 0 hit points, Rasmus's spirit possesses his body and begins to seek out Arne's blood to complete his revivification.

Read:

Moments after what should have been the deathpriest's final breath, his body shudders to life. As he stands, he rips the ram's skull from his head, and his face changes before your eyes, becoming impossibly old. He looks at you and smiles.

"Thank you for releasing me. That priest was a fool to think he could master my spirit! Now, if you wish to serve me, bring me the blood of the one who bound me for so many centuries, that I may drink it and be restored to my full powers!"

Deathpriest of Orcus — **Level 9 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 400

HP 71; **Bloodied** 35 — **Initiative** +7
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22 — **Perception** +7
Speed 5

Traits

Closer to Orcus
While bloodied, the deathpriest can score a critical hit on a natural 19 or 20.

Standard Actions

Skull Mace (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 8 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Shadow Curse (implement, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target takes a –4 penalty to saving throws (save ends).

Unholy Rebuke (fear, implement, psychic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +12 vs. Will
Hit: 3d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Undead allies in the burst shift up to half their speed.

Minor Actions

Infuse with Shadow (healing, implement) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: An undead ally within 10 squares of the deathpriest regains 10 hit points.

Skills Religion +11
Str 14 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 14 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, skull mace, holy symbol of Orcus

The heroes might be able to stall Rasmus for a time by pretending to do his bidding, but eventually the vampire figures out that the blood of Arne has been taken from the chapel. Following its scent, he transforms into mist and begins flying toward the Profaned Temple.

If the heroes attack Rasmus, he might trade blows with them for a round or two—more amused than threatened—but eventually he grows frustrated with the limited scope of his powers and flees in mist form to seek out Arne's blood.

Quasit — **Level 7 Controller**
Tiny elemental humanoid (demon) — XP 300

HP 75; **Bloodied** 37 — **Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +10
Speed 8 — Darkvision

Traits

Tempter's Influence ✦ **Aura** 2
Enemies within the aura take a –2 penalty to saving throws.

Standard Actions

Bite (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 0 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends).

Minor Actions

Evil Temptation ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Close burst 3 (one creature in the burst); +10 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends). The effect also ends if the target makes an attack against one of its allies.

Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The quasit becomes invisible until it makes an attack roll.

Triggered Actions

Variable Resistance ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The quasit takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.
Effect (Free Action): The quasit gains resist 10 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.

Skills Arcana +8, Bluff +11, Stealth +13
Str 8 (+2) **Dex** 21 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 11 (+3) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

2 Ghouls **Level 5 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

HP 63; **Bloodied** 31 **Initiative** +8
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16 **Perception** +2
Speed 8, climb 4 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Weakened Paralysis
Whenever the ghoul takes radiant damage, one creature immobilized or stunned by the ghoul can make a saving throw against one of those effects.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claws ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⸸ **Ghoulish Bite ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Skills Stealth +11
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Ghoul Flesh Seeker **Level 4 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 175

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22 **Initiative** +10
AC 18, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 **Perception** +9
Speed 8 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Traits

Shadow Skulk
The ghoul flesh seeker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has cover or concealment instead of needing superior cover or total concealment.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⸸ **Prepare for Sacrifice ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature the flesh seeker was hidden from at the start of the flesh seeker's turn); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the flesh seeker knocks the target prone and grabs it. The target takes a -2 penalty to attempts to escape the grab and cannot stand up until the grab ends.

⸸ **Render Unto Orcus** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one prone creature grabbed by the flesh seeker); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.

Skills Acrobatics +11, Stealth +11
Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Equipment dagger

4 Cultists of Orcus **Level 6 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 63 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion **Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18 **Perception** +2
Speed 6

Standard Actions

⸸ **Sacrificial Knife** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage, or 10 if the target is immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious.

Triggered Actions

Death's Swift Approach ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An attack misses the cultist.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The cultist shifts up to half its speed.

Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+2)
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment sacrificial knife

C4. Priest's Quarters

This room serves as the personal chamber of the priest of Arne's Rest, a stout and kindly middle-aged man named Father Ulter. (The acolytes reside in a separate building a short distance from the chapel proper.)

When the heroes enter area C4, read:

This small chamber is appointed with a hearth, bed, wardrobe, and writing desk. The bedspread's rich brocade is stained with blood, and the desk and wardrobe appear to have been ransacked.

Perception DC 10: *A trail of blood on the floor leads under the bed.*

Perception DC 15: *The grating on the hearth has been pulled out, and behind it you can see what looks like a secret panel that has been carelessly left ajar.*

The secret compartment behind the hearth contains the *cloak of Arne*. It is where the heart of Rasmus was kept safely hidden until Father Ulter revealed its location under the deathpriest's questioning.

The writing desk is scattered with books and scrolls. Most are mundane ledgers and correspondence; others are religious histories recounting the story of Arne's triumph over Rasmus. Mixed in among these items are two ritual scrolls: Purify Water and Speak with Dead.

Underneath the bed lies Father Ulter. He is unconscious and badly wounded, having been left for the ghoul flesh seeker's amusement after the deathpriest finished with him. If the heroes succeed at a DC 15 Heal check or give Ulter any form of magical healing, he returns to consciousness. After thanking the characters for saving his life, he gladly tells them anything they want to know.

The heroes can gain the following information from speaking with Ulter.

- During the cult's attack on the chapel, Ulter sent an acolyte named Brother Jerom to carry the blood of Arne to the Profaned Temple. Ulter hoped that some vestige of the Raven Queen's power might still linger there and help protect the blood from falling into the cult's hands.
- Soon after the chapel fell to the cultists, an undead eladrin dressed in the arms of Pelor arrived. She seemed intent on fighting the cultists, but Ulter convinced her to go to the Profaned Temple to guard Brother Jerom. She tried to bring Ulter with her, but he stayed behind to cover her escape.
- The blood of Arne has powerful restorative properties. Over the years, it has been used to heal the sick and even bring the dead back to life. Although once it was said to have filled the reliquary's chalice, now only a few drops remain.
- Rasmus is only a shadow of his former self, but he is still a force to be reckoned with. The heroes would do well to seek out Arne's relics before going to face him. Time is of the essence. If Rasmus finds and drinks the blood of Arne, he will be nigh unstoppable.
- The *cloak of Arne* is in the secret compartment at the back of the hearth.
- The *blade of Arne* is buried with Rasmus's corpse in the sepulcher in area C7. Ulter knows that the tomb is locked and warded, but the key and passphrase to open it have been lost for generations.
- The *symbol of Arne* is buried with Rasmus's head in a cave at the bottom of the well in area C8.
- If the heroes defeat Rasmus, they will need to use the remaining blood of Arne to reconsecrate her relics to bind the vampire's spirit and prevent it from rising again. (Separating his body parts is not strictly necessary, but it serves as a precaution against Rasmus returning fully formed. The chapel's order never imagined that anyone would attempt something like what the deathpriest did.)

Cloak of Arne — Heroic Level

This white cloak, emblazoned with the yellow sun of Pelor, also bears the rust-colored stains of Arne's blood, and afforded her greater protection against her enemy's attacks than any shield or suit of armor could.

Artifact: Neck Slot
Enhancement Bonus: +2 to Fortitude, Reflex, Will
Property
You gain a +2 item bonus to all defenses against attacks made by Rasmus.
Utility Power ✦ Encounter (No Action)
Trigger: You fail a saving throw made against the effects of one of Rasmus's attacks.
Effect: You save. You can choose to lose a healing surge, and if you do, you do not expend this power.

The properties and powers of Arne's relics are effective against Rasmus's head and corpse as well as against the vampire himself.

C5. Cemetery

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

In this yard, generations of the faithful have been buried out of respect for their service to the chapel. Now, however, ghouls roam the yard, digging up corpses to feast on their remains.

Monsters: 1 underpriest of Orcus, 4 ghouls.

Read:

The yard's broad paths are lined with headstones. A grand stone sepulcher stands at its southeast corner, and a smaller stone outbuilding anchors the northeast corner. Where the paths converge at the yard's center stands a large stone fountain. Fenced off from the rest of the yard, near the north end of the chapel, is a well.

Several graves here have been dug up, and the exhumed remains lie scattered about the yard. Ghouls crouch behind some of the gravestones, clawing through the dirt for bones and cracking them with their teeth.

The ghouls are too busy feeding to be bothered chasing after casual onlookers, but if they're attacked or if they notice the heroes trying to move through the yard, they attack the interlopers.

The underpriest of Orcus keeps watch over the yard and the ghouls within. He begins the encounter in area C6 but comes out at the first sound of combat.

One of the ghouls begins the encounter hidden in the fountain at the yard's center. Roll initiative for it as normal, but do not place it on the map at the beginning of combat.

Gravestones: Squares containing gravestones are difficult terrain.

Open Graves: These squares are pits 5 feet deep. Creatures can move into the pits freely but must make a DC 10 Athletics check to hop out of them, or spend an extra point of movement to climb out. Creatures in a pit have cover against ranged attacks originating from outside the pit. Creatures that are forced to move into a pit fall prone, but they take no falling damage.

Well: The well shaft is 50 feet deep and is equipped with a bucket and chain pinned to the lip of the well, which can be used to climb down (DC 10 Athletics check). The well shaft leads to area C8.

Fountain: The fountain's pool is 5 feet deep and filled with brackish water that has been tainted by the ghouls. The sculpture in its center depicts the lady Arne after her battle with Rasmus. Her eyes are closed, and a wound is visible on her side. Her body is cradled by three companions whose heads are bent in grief. Water from the fountain trickles from their faces, falling in heavy drops on Arne's body before flowing into the pool. Around the lip of the pool are inscribed the following words:

"As the darkest stains are washed clean by the purest waters, so too were Arne's sins in life washed clean by the tears of her companions in death."

Heal DC 15 or Religion DC 10: The water of this pool appears to have had cleansing and restorative properties, but it has been tainted by the presence of the undead.

Any living creature that drinks from the tainted pool loses 1 healing surge.

The heroes can use the ritual scroll of Purify Water from area C4 or a similar ability to cleanse the pool. Any creature that drinks from the cleansed water regains 3 healing surges (a creature can benefit from this effect only once per day, and the water loses this property 24 hours after being removed from the fountain). Falling Rain can use the cleansed water to restore life to the fields of Dead Haven; bringing him a sample of the water fulfills the conditions of the party's quest from him.

Underpriest of Orcus **Level 6 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 250

HP 71; **Bloodied** 35 **Initiative** +5
AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19 **Perception** +5
Speed 5

Traits

Closer to Orcus
While bloodied, the underpriest can score a critical hit on a natural 19 or 20.

Standard Actions

Mace (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Shadow Curse (implement, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends).

Minor Actions

Infuse with Shadow (healing, implement) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: An undead ally within 5 squares of the underpriest regains 10 hit points.

Skills Religion +9
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 18 (+7)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment chainmail, mace, holy symbol of Orcus

4 Ghouls **Level 5 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

HP 63; **Bloodied** 31 **Initiative** +8
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16 **Perception** +2
Speed 8, climb 4 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Weakened Paralysis
Whenever the ghoul takes radiant damage, one creature immobilized or stunned by the ghoul can make a saving throw against one of those effects.

Standard Actions

Claws ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Ghoulish Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Skills Stealth +11
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

C6. Groundskeeper's Quarters

This small outbuilding is the residence of the chapel's groundskeeper. More recently, one of the underpriests of Orcus has been residing here, keeping watch over the ghouls in area C5.

Read:
This small house is appointed with a bed, hearth, and writing desk. The coals in the hearth glow warmly.

Treasure: The drawer of the writing desk contains 15 gp and a *potion of healing*. The key to area C7 is hidden behind a loose stone behind the writing desk (Perception DC 22 to find).

C7. Sepulcher

Combat and Trap Encounter Level 2 (650 XP)

This sepulcher contains the tombs of both Arne and Rasmus. Traditionally, the chapel's priest and the groundskeeper knew the passphrase to bypass the tomb's protective glyph, but it was lost over a century ago when they both died within hours of each other without passing on their knowledge. Recently, with the weakening of the wards on Arne's relics, Rasmus's corpse has started digging its way out of its tomb.

Monsters: Headless corpse of Rasmus.

Trap: Glyph of warding (radiant).

Read:

This stately stone sepulcher is decorated with carvings of Arne and her companions. The sunburst symbol of Pelor dominates the crypt's stone door.

Perception DC 15: *You hear a faint scraping sound coming from within the tomb.*

Door: The door can be opened with a DC 22 Strength check or Thievery check, or with the key from area C6.

Glyph: Although the heroes might know that the door is warded from having spoken with Ulter, they must still succeed on an Arcana check or a Perception check to detect the glyph before attempting to disable it. If the party triggers the glyph, its attack targets only the squares outside the sepulcher.

When the characters open the door, read:

The tomb's interior holds two stone sarcophagi, the lid to one of which has been opened. Before it stands a headless corpse dressed in black and crimson robes, an ancient wound visible on its chest. The corpse appears to be clawing at the tomb's wall with its nails, leaving visible furrows in the stone. At your appearance, the corpse leaves off its clawing and lurches forward, reaching out for you with its pale hands.

The corpse of Rasmus attacks relentlessly, fighting until it is defeated. Any victory over the corpse is only temporary; within 1d4 days, the vestige of Rasmus's spirit that inhabits the corpse causes it to reanimate. Even if the corpse is physically destroyed, it reforms within 1d4 days. Mundane attempts at binding the corpse, such as chaining it to a wall or burying it under a pile of stone, contain it for only a short while. Eventually, it finds a way to break out of nearly any confinement and begins to seek its missing heart.

If you want to heighten the sense of danger, you can instead have the corpse reanimate every 1d4 hours. The point is not to make the heroes rehash the same fight over and over, but to give them a sense of the implacable nature of Rasmus's enduring spirit.

Treasure: The vampire's sarcophagus contains the *blade of Arne*. (The blade is presented by default as a longsword, but change it to be whatever type of bladed weapon the party is likely to find most useful. With a few tweaks to the story, you can make it another category of weapon altogether.)

Blade of Arne — Heroic Level

The blessings laid on this shining blade by the priests of Pelor served not only to sharpen its edge against bone and steel but also to cut through the evil spells with which Rasmus clung to his unnatural existence.

Artifact: Longsword
Enhancement Bonus: +2 to attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +2d6 damage, or +2d12 damage to Rasmus
Property
Any time you hit Rasmus with an attack using this weapon, his regeneration does not function on his next turn.
Utility Power ✦ Encounter (No Action)
Trigger: You miss Rasmus with an attack using this weapon.
Effect: Reroll the attack roll, and use the second result. You can choose to lose a healing surge, and if you do, you do not expend this power.

Headless Corpse of Rasmus — **Level 8 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (blind, undead) — XP 350

HP 108; **Bloodied** 54 — **Initiative** +2
AC 20, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19 — **Perception** +3
Speed 6 — Tremorsense 5
Immune disease, gaze attacks, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Strangle
At the start of the corpse's turn, any creature grabbed by the corpse takes 10 damage.

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage.

Double Attack ✦ Recharge when the corpse has no creature grabbed
Effect: The corpse uses *slam* twice. If both attacks hit the same creature, the corpse grabs it (escape DC 16).

Hurl Opponent ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the corpse); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares and falls prone.
Miss: Half damage, the grab ends, and the target falls prone.

Minor Actions

Command the Dead ✦ Encounter
Effect: Close burst 10 (humanoid corpses in the burst); the target rises as a zombie shambler. The zombies act immediately after the corpse in the initiative order.

Str 21 (+9)	**Dex** 6 (+2)	**Wis** 8 (+3)
Con 18 (+8)	**Int** 1 (-1)	**Cha** 3 (+0)

Alignment evil — **Languages** –

Glyph of Warding	**Level 7 Trap**
Object	XP 300
Detect Perception DC 27, Arcana DC 23	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
✧ **Attack** (radiant) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +10 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d6 + 4 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Thievery DC 23. *Failure (18 or lower):* The glyph is triggered.	

C8. Underground Grotto

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,175 XP)

According to the teachings of the Raven Queen's priests, rivers and streams are symbolic of the divide between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead. At least, that was the thinking of the acolytes who centuries ago moved Rasmus's head to this small cave beside the underground stream that feeds the chapel's well. They hoped that it would prevent his spirit from crossing back into the mortal realm.

Over time, the head's presence has corrupted the vermin that dwell in the cave. More recently, with the weakening of the wards on Arne's relics, the head has cast off the weight of the *symbol of Arne* and now flies freely about its lair. Whether because of the spider's webs or the running water, it has not yet ventured outside the cave.

Light: None.

Monsters: Head of Rasmus (H), 3 deathjump spiders (D), 2 spider swarms (S).

Well: The well shaft is 50 feet deep and is equipped with a bucket and chain pinned to the lip of the well, which can be used to climb down (DC 10 Athletics check). The stream at the bottom isn't deep enough to break a fall; any character failing the Athletics check by 5 or more takes falling damage as normal.

The map for area C8 is a top-down view of the stream and tunnels that lie directly underneath the abbey's grounds. Characters climbing or falling down the well shaft land in the stream in the space marked "Up to area C5" on the map.

When the heroes go to the well's bottom, read:

As you come to the bottom of the well shaft, you enter a shallow stream running through an underground tunnel just barely large enough for a human to walk through at a stoop. A little ways down the tunnel, you see a side passage that's been closed over with webs.

When the heroes enter the cave, read:

The webbed passage opens into a cave whose ceiling slopes up to a height of 15 feet. Thick webs coat patches of the floor and walls.

Perception DC 10: *You see the glint of gold on the floor near the back of the cave.*

Perception DC 18: *You see spiders the size of wolves crouching amid the webs, ready to strike. Hundreds of smaller spiders, each the size of your hand, swarm in some of the other webs.*

Perception DC 24: *Another shape—what looks like a disembodied head—hovers near the ceiling, behind a curtain of webbing.*

As soon as they're spotted, or else as soon as one of the heroes moves to the back of the cave, the monsters attack. If the characters have already had the encounter in area C3, they recognize the head's face as the same one the deathpriest had after the spirit of Rasmus took over his body.

The head flies about the cave, hurling curses at the heroes and taunting them throughout the combat. It knows what the other parts of its body are up to, and it describes how the heart is getting ever closer to finding Arne's blood while the heroes waste time chasing down her relics.

If the heroes defeat the head, it follows the same rules as the corpse in area C7 for reanimating.

Webs: The webs are difficult terrain and lightly obscuring. Creatures other than the spiders that enter or end their turn in a square of webbing must make a saving throw or be immobilized (save ends). A square

of webbing can be cleared by dealing 10 damage to it (all defenses 10, vulnerable 5 fire).

Ceilings: The cave's ceilings are 15 feet high, allowing the head of Rasmus to stay out of reach of most melee attacks.

Treasure: The *symbol of Arne* lies on the floor in the back of the cave.

Symbol of Arne — Heroic Level

This gold symbol is polished to a mirror sheen. Its surface is said to reflect not a person's face, but his soul. When Arne held it up before Rasmus, whatever the vampire saw there caused him to recoil, allowing the hero to strike him down with her blade.

Artifact: Holy symbol
Enhancement Bonus: +2 to attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +2d6 radiant damage

Property

If you hit Rasmus with an attack, you can push him 1 square. If the attack was made with this implement, you can instead push him up to 2 squares, or add 2 squares to the distance of any forced movement normally allowed by the attack.

Attack Power ✦ Encounter (Minor Action)

Effect: You force Rasmus to land in his space or the nearest safe space. If Rasmus is in mist form, he reverts to his normal form. You can choose to lose a healing surge, and if you do, you do not expend this power.

Head of Rasmus — Level 8 Controller

Small natural humanoid (undead) — XP 350

HP 86; **Bloodied** 43 — **Initiative** +9
AC 20, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21 — **Perception** +6
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover) — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Standard Actions

⨁ **Bite ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage.

Curse of Pain (psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when the head uses *curse of sickness*
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the head's next turn.

Curse of Sickness (poison) ✦ **Recharge** when the head uses *curse of pain*
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target cannot regain hit points until the end of the head's next turn.

Curse of Death (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: 10 (one bloodied creature); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + 9 necrotic damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: If the target drops below 1 hit point, the power is not expended.

Skills Arcana +13, Religion +13, Stealth +14

Str 8 (+3)	**Dex** 21 (+9)	**Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 14 (+6)	**Int** 19 (+8)	**Cha** 20 (+9)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common

3 Deathjump Spiders	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (spider)	XP 175 each
HP 52; **Bloodied** 26	**Initiative** +5
AC 18, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15	**Perception** +7
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	Tremorsense 5
Resist 5 poison	
Traits	
Web Walk	
The spider ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
⸸ **Death from Above** ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃	
Effect: The spider jumps up to 6 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. After the jump, the spider uses *bite*, knocking the target prone on a hit.	
Move Actions	
Prodigious Leap ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The spider jumps up to 10 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8	
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+2)	
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 1 (-3) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

2 Spider Swarms	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural beast (spider, swarm)	XP 150 each
HP 44; **Bloodied** 22	**Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15	**Perception** +3
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	Tremorsense 5
Resist half damage from melee; **Vulnerable** 5 to close and ranged attacks and area attacks	
Traits	
☼ **Swarm Attack** ✦ **Aura** 1	
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed until the start of its next turn.	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Web Walk	
The spider ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Swarm of Fangs** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Skills Athletics +6, Stealth +9	
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)	
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 7 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

D. Profaned Temple

Rasmus has reached the profane temple ahead of the party, but ironically he needs their help to claim Arne's blood. After fighting their way past the restless spirits of the vampire's disciples, the heroes confront Rasmus and attempt to defeat him before he completes his revival. If they defeat Rasmus, the party must decide how best to use Arne's blood to secure peace for the people of Dead Haven.

Refer to the map of the Profaned Temple for the following location descriptions.

D1. Approach

It takes about an hour to climb from Arne's Rest up the mountain path to the temple. The path hasn't been kept up and is treacherous in spots. Have one of the heroes attempt a DC 22 Nature check to find a safe way to navigate the path (other characters can aid with this check). Success indicates that the party reaches the temple safely. Failure means that each character must make a DC 15 Athletics check to overcome the path's obstacles; failure results in the character losing a healing surge.

When the heroes reach the temple, read:

Ahead, perched on the mountainside, is an ancient stone temple. Its low outer wall has crumbled in several spots and is overgrown with ivy. Centuries of wind and rain have eroded the ornate carvings on the temple proper. A pair of iron-banded doors set in the building's face stands ajar.

D2. Hall of Lost Souls

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,250 XP)

This chamber, once the entryway to the temple, became the place where Rasmus granted his "blessing" to his disciples, transforming them into vampire spawn. The spawn were slain centuries ago by Arne and her companions, but their restless spirits have been awakened by their master's return to the temple.

Light: Dim (daylight filtering through windows) or none (night).

Monsters: 2 wraiths, 2 mad wraiths, 1 sovereign wraith.

Read:

This temple was once richly appointed. Moth-eaten tapestries hang from the walls, and the windows are set with leaded glass, its colors obscured by the film of dust that coats everything here. Behind thick pillars you see stone sarcophagi standing in the aisles. A red velvet carpet, dingy with age, leads to a closed door on the facing wall.

Perception DC 10: *You hear the muffled sound of voices coming from beyond the door.*

Perception DC 21: *Shadows move in places where there should be none. As you watch, the shadows resolve into wraithlike beings with burning red eyes. One of them carries a shadowy blade.*

The wraiths attack as soon as the characters move into the room, gaining a surprise round if the heroes didn't notice their presence. The mad wraiths wail in grief over their wretched state and the return of their terrible master, while the sovereign wraith blames the characters for its fate, mistaking them for the band of heroes that originally slew it.

Sarcophagi: The sarcophagi are blocking terrain, but characters can hop on top of them with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Treasure: One sarcophagus contains a level 7 magic item and a garnet worth 100 gp.

2 Wraiths — **Level 5 Lurker**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 200 each

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 — **Initiative** +10
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +2
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Insubstantial
The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Wraith
When the wraith kills a humanoid, that humanoid becomes a wraith figment at the start of this wraith's next turn. The new wraith appears in the space where the humanoid died or in the nearest unoccupied square, and it rolls a new initiative check. The new wraith acts under the Dungeon Master's control.

Standard Actions

Shadow Touch (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, or 4d6 + 14 necrotic damage if the wraith was invisible to the target when it attacked.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Glide (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An attack that does not deal force or radiant damage hits the wraith.
Effect (Free Action): The wraith becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack or until the end of the encounter. The wraith teleports up to 6 squares and cannot attack until the end of its next turn.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 4 (-1)	**Dex** 18 (+6)	**Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 17 (+5)	**Int** 6 (+0)	**Cha** 15 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

2 Mad Wraiths — **Level 6 Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 250 each

HP 73; **Bloodied** 36 — **Initiative** +8
AC 20, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 — **Perception** -1
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Mad Whispers (psychic) ✦ **Aura** 3
Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 5 psychic damage, and the wraith slides it up to 2 squares.

Insubstantial
The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Wraith
When the wraith kills a humanoid, that humanoid becomes a wraith figment at the start of this wraith's next turn. The new wraith appears in the space where the humanoid died or in the nearest unoccupied square, and it rolls a new initiative check. The new wraith acts under the Dungeon Master's control.

Standard Actions

Touch of Madness (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Touch of Chaos (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the wraith slides the target up to 5 squares. The target must then use a free action to make a basic attack against its nearest ally.
Miss: Half damage, and the wraith slides the target up to 2 squares.

Skills Stealth +13

Str 6 (+1)	**Dex** 20 (+8)	**Wis** 3 (-1)
Con 17 (+6)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 19 (+7)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Sovereign Wraith	**Level 8 Soldier**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 350
HP 89; **Bloodied** 44	**Initiative** +11
AC 24, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21	**Perception** +6
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic	

Traits

Insubstantial

The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Wraith

When the wraith kills a humanoid, that humanoid becomes a wraith figment at the start of this wraith's next turn. The new wraith appears in the space where the humanoid died or in the nearest unoccupied square, and it rolls a new initiative check. The new wraith acts under the Dungeon Master's control.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Spectral Sword** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 + 2 necrotic damage, and the target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends both).

Effect: The wraith marks the target until the end of the wraith's next turn.

† **Lonely Death** (illusion) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃

Effect: The wraith uses *spectral sword*. If the attack hits, all creatures except the wraith are invisible to the target (save ends).

Skills Stealth +14

Str 15 (+6)	**Dex** 20 (+9)	**Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 14 (+6)	**Cha** 19 (+8)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common

D3. Altar Room

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,650 XP)

This chamber contains the altar that Rasmus once used to perform his oblations to the Raven Queen. When he turned his back on her teachings and exchanged his mortal life for the immortality of undeath, he could not approach the altar any longer.

When Anja Silvermane arrived at the temple to help Brother Jerom guard the blood of Arne, she, too, could not approach the altar. Reasoning it to be the safest place to keep Arne's blood, Jerom poured the blood out of its chalice into the altar's basin.

Brother Jerom's intuition proved correct when Rasmus arrived at the temple and tried to claim the blood from the altar. Realizing that he could not, the vampire instead used his *dominating gaze* power to force Jerom to retrieve the blood for him. Anja, desperate to prevent Rasmus from succeeding, slew Jerom. The vampire and the undead paladin have been at a standoff ever since.

Light: Dim (daylight filtering through windows and candlelight from altar).

Monsters: Rasmus, Anja Silvermane, 2 wraiths, 1 zombie shambler (Brother Jerom).

Read:

More rugs and tapestries adorn this chamber, and a series of shelves to one side are lined with musty tomes and scrolls. At the far end of the chamber, an ornate altar bears the graven image of the Raven Queen. Rasmus stands in the middle of the room glowering at another figure standing defiantly before him—a silver-haired eladrin warrior wearing the symbol of Pelor. She, too, has been afflicted by the curse of undeath, yet she regards the vampire with obvious loathing. The crumpled body of a young acolyte lies at her feet.

Perception DC 10: *The acolyte's robes are stained with blood, as is the blade of the eladrin's sword. The young man does not draw breath.*

Perception DC 21: *More wraiths flit about the edges of the room.*

Insight DC 15: *Hatred wars with remorse on the eladrin's face.*

When Rasmus sees the heroes, read:

Once again, the vampire smiles upon seeing you.

"Your arrival is most fortuitous. My former god conspires to keep me from my prize. But now you will retrieve it for me, whether you will it or no."

At this, the eladrin turns to look at you with wild eyes, gripping her sword tightly, but at a gesture from Rasmus her body goes rigid.

"Oh, no, my dear, I won't be making that mistake again. After the trouble you've caused me, you don't think I kept you alive for the pleasure of your company, do you? No, this time you'll help me."

The vampire looks to where the acolyte lies dead on the floor. "You may as well help, too." The young man's body begins to rise.

The vampire's power over other undead allows him to control Anja in this encounter. This effect is more powerful than the *dominating gaze* that Rasmus can use against the characters, allowing Anja to take a full complement of actions each round and effectively making her fight as Rasmus's ally.

The wraiths begin the encounter hidden unless the heroes noticed them previously.

Rasmus's goal in this encounter is to use the characters to retrieve the blood of Arne. To this end, he focuses on dominating whichever characters are closest to the altar or can move there most quickly. Rasmus can achieve his aim in as few as 4 rounds, as outlined below, although this depends on the heroes' initial positions, speed, and ability to resist his domination.

Round 1: A character moves to the square behind the altar (where the empty chalice lies on the floor).

Round 2: The character picks up the chalice.

Round 3: The character fills the chalice with blood from the altar.

Round 4: The character moves away from the altar. Rasmus, on his turn, can take the chalice from the character as a minor action and drink the blood as another minor action.

Anja, Jerom, and the wraiths focus on harrying the other characters, preventing them from interfering with the dominated character. None of the monsters attacks a hero under the effect of the vampire's domination.

Altar: The Raven Queen's altar serves as a powerful barrier to undead. No undead creatures can target the altar or enter a square adjacent to the altar (although they can still make melee attacks into those squares).

Anja: Although Anja cannot resist the vampire's control, she continues to spout defiance throughout the fight, exhorting the heroes to destroy Rasmus and warning them of the dire consequences of failure. She also tries to convince the characters to destroy her and all of the inhabitants of Dead Haven, on the supposition that nothing good can come of their cursed existence. The following are examples of things she might say during the fight.

- "Strike that monster down! His existence is an affront to the gods!"
- "Do not allow him to claim Arne's blood, or all hope is lost!"
- "Do not hesitate to slay me, heroes. I stand in your way."
- "Better that I and the people of Arnesbloom had died that day. There is no salvation for our souls now."
- *[When she hits a character.]* "See how he forces me to do his evil bidding? He will do the same to all the people of this land if you do not stop him!"
- *[When a character falls.]* "Better to die a true death than linger in this wretched state."
- *[When she is reduced to 0 hit points.]* "Now I go to cursed oblivion, never to know the warmth of Pelor's smile."

Bookshelves: The bookshelves hold numerous religious and philosophical texts dealing with the domain of death and the Raven Queen. They also hold several magical tomes that deal with blood magic and necromancy.

DM NOTE

Rasmus's *command the dead* power has the potential to turn an already challenging encounter into an overwhelming one for low-level, poorly prepared, or plain unlucky parties. Rather than have Rasmus use it immediately, keep this power in reserve to use if the fight starts to feel too easy, or to heighten the tension as Rasmus gets closer to achieving his goal. If the group is already having a tough time with the encounter, there's no need to have Rasmus use the power at all.

Rasmus, Vampire Lord **Level 8 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 700

HP 180; **Bloodied** 90 **Initiative** +7
AC 22, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21 **Perception** +14
Speed 6 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Regeneration
Rasmus regains 5 hit points whenever he starts his turn and has at least 1 hit point.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage.

Vampiric Touch (healing, necrotic) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d8 + 8 necrotic damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Rasmus regains hit points equal to the amount of damage dealt.

Dominating Gaze (charm) **✦ Recharge** when no creature is dominated by this power
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +11 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Curse of Pain (psychic) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of Rasmus's next turn.

Curse of Sickness (poison) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target cannot regain hit points until the end of Rasmus's next turn.

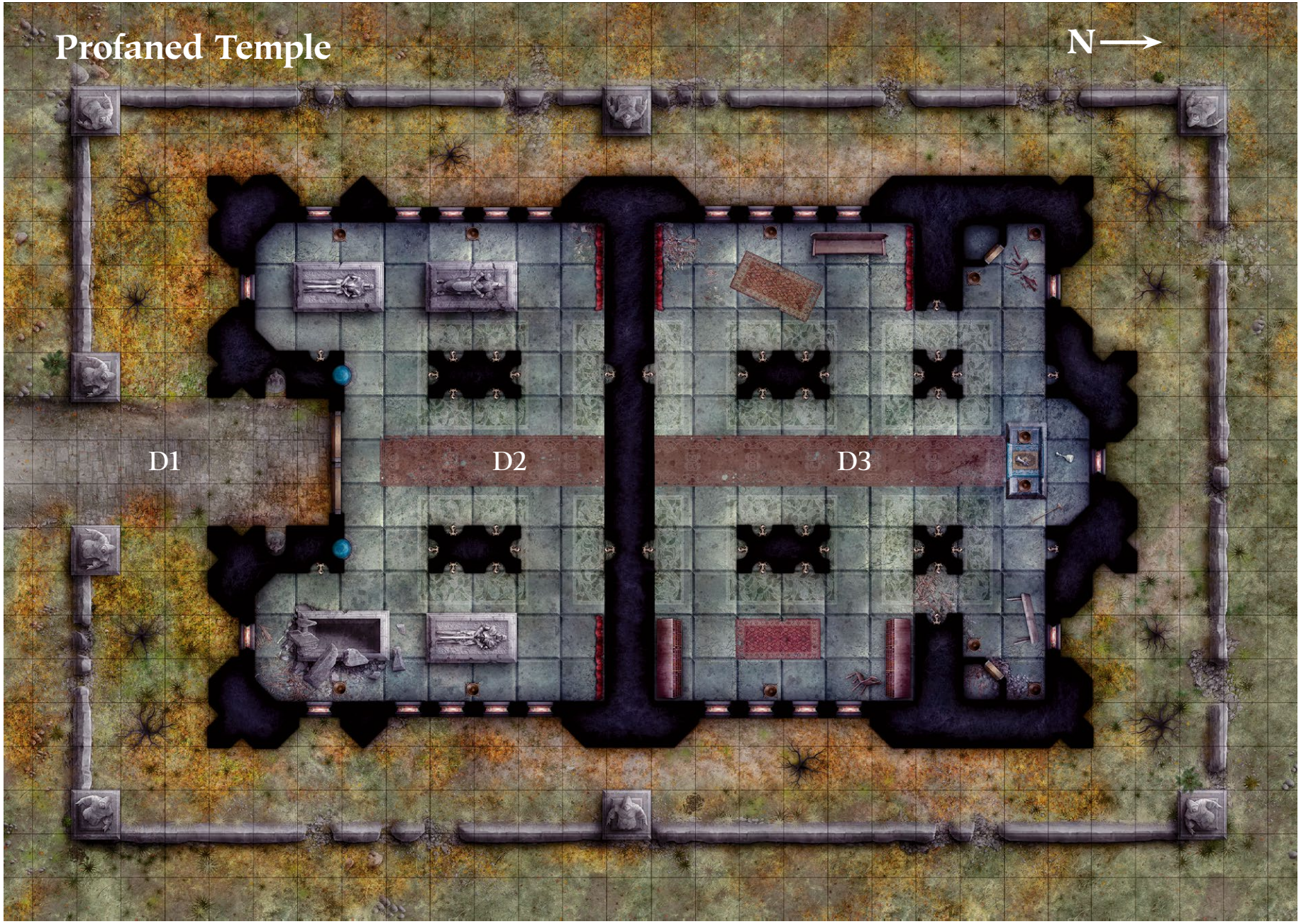
Combination Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Rasmus uses any two different attack powers.

Mist Form (polymorph) **✦ Encounter**
Effect: Rasmus becomes insubstantial and gains fly 12. Rasmus cannot attack. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until Rasmus ends it as a minor action.

Minor Actions

Command the Dead ✦ Encounter
Effect: Close burst 5; four wraith figments appear in the area. The figments act immediately after Rasmus in the initiative order.

Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+8)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common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Anja Silvermane — Level 6 Elite Soldier

Medium natural humanoid (undead), eladrin — XP 500

HP 144; **Bloodied** 72 — **Initiative** +7
AC 22, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +5
Speed 5 — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Defender Aura ✦ Aura 1
Unless they are marked, enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls when they make an attack that does not include Anja or another creature that has an active *defender aura* as a target.

Standard Actions

Longsword (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.

Shield Slam (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Anja's next turn.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Anja makes two *longsword* attacks or one *longsword* attack and one *shield slam* attack.

Flashing Blade (radiant) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 9 radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Anja's next turn.

Move Actions

Fey Step (teleportation) **✦ Encounter**
Effect: Anja teleports up to 5 squares.

Triggered Actions

Righteous Radiance (radiant) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An unmarked enemy in Anja's aura shifts or makes an attack that does not include Anja or another creature that has an active *defender aura* as a target.
Effect (Opportunity Action): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); 10 radiant damage.

Skills Heal +10, History +8, Religion +8

Str 20 (+8)	**Dex** 15 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 18 (+7)

Alignment lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword

2 Wraiths — Level 5 Lurker

Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 200 each

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 — **Initiative** +10
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +2
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Insubstantial
The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Wraith
When the wraith kills a humanoid, that humanoid becomes a wraith figment at the start of this wraith's next turn. The new wraith appears in the space where the humanoid died or in the nearest unoccupied square, and it rolls a new initiative check. The new wraith acts under the Dungeon Master's control.

Standard Actions

Shadow Touch (necrotic) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, or 4d6 + 14 necrotic damage if the wraith was invisible to the target when it attacked.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Glide (teleportation) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An attack that does not deal force or radiant damage hits the wraith.
Effect (Free Action): The wraith becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack or until the end of the encounter. The wraith teleports up to 6 squares and cannot attack until the end of its next turn.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 4 (-1)	**Dex** 18 (+6)	**Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 17 (+5)	**Int** 6 (+0)	**Cha** 15 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Zombie Shambler — Level 5 Minion Brute

Medium natural animate (undead) — XP 50

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +1
AC 17, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +1
Speed 4 — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 8 damage.

Triggered Actions

Deathless Hunger ✦ Encounter
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.

Str 18 (+6)	**Dex** 8 (+1)	**Wis** 8 (+1)
Con 15 (+4)	**Int** 1 (-3)	**Cha** 3 (-2)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

4 Wraith Figments — Level 6 Minion Skirmisher

Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 63 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17 — **Perception** +2
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic — Darkvision
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing

Standard Actions

Shadow Caress (necrotic) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 7 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the wraith's next turn.

Move Actions

Shadow Glide ✦ Encounter
Effect: The wraith figment shifts up to 6 squares.

Skills Stealth +10

Str 3 (-2)	**Dex** 17 (+5)	**Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 13 (+3)	**Int** 4 (-1)	**Cha** 15 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** –

Treasure: A level 6 magic item and a level 9 magic item are stowed in this chamber, likely around the altar or in one of the closets. The gold chalice used to carry Arne's blood is worth 250 gp. Tucked in the folds of Brother Jerom's robes is a ritual scroll that bears the same mark as some of the books on the shelves (he found it while examining the contents of Rasmus's library). The scroll has a powerful ritual that is designed to destroy any undead creatures in a large area of effect by banishing their spirits to the Shadowfell. As written, the ritual requires exotic components that neither Jerom nor the characters have access to, but the scroll bears annotations made by Jerom on how to modify the ritual to use Arne's blood as the material component. Jerom notes that the ritual's effect should extend far enough to wipe out the cult's forces as far away as Arnesbloom. After Anja told Jerom of the town's fate, he hid the scroll and resolved not to use it, not wishing to be responsible for the deaths of so many innocents.

Development

If Rasmus drinks the blood of Arne, the heroes fail in their quest. The vampire regains half his hit points, recharges his *command the dead* power, and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +5 bonus to damage rolls for the rest of the encounter. Even if the heroes still somehow defeat him, they now have no way to prevent Rasmus from reanimating and eventually enslaving the population of Dead Haven.

If the heroes defeat Rasmus and Anja is still alive, she regains control of herself and helps the characters dispatch any remaining undead. She then exhorts the heroes to use the last of Arne's blood to reconsecrate the relics and bind Rasmus's spirit. They have a brief window of time (1d4 days, though you can compress the time scale to hours to heighten the pressure) in which to bind the spirit before Rasmus can reanimate.

If the characters inform Anja of their intention to bring the blood to Confidence, she tries to dissuade them by pointing out that it will leave Rasmus free to reanimate. She also insists that while Confidence's ritual might return the townsfolk to some semblance of life, no wizard's magic could undo the damage done to their souls, which she believes will be forfeit in any case.

Anja does not know about Jerom's ritual scroll, but if the heroes discover it before using Arne's blood for another purpose, Anja encourages them to use the scroll. Believing there is no salvation for her or the people of Dead Haven, she would rather their souls be banished than allow for the possibility that they might be corrupted by the next evil cult or powerful undead to wander through. Moreover, banishing Rasmus's soul to the Shadowfell would be a more definitive end to his evil than binding it with Arne's relics, which—as the characters have now seen—is a less than perfect solution.

THE BLOOD OF ARNE

Although the fight with Rasmus is the climax of the adventure, the story's dramatic tension revolves around what the heroes decide to do with the blood of Arne. Be sure the players understand the choices before them—consecrating the relics, completing Confidence's ritual, or using Jerom's ritual—and make clear that whichever they choose will consume the last of the blood.

Although Anja argues passionately for her preferred course of action, ultimately she accepts whatever judgment the heroes make. The bitterness of having had to kill Jerom is too fresh for her to contemplate willingly raising her hand against the characters.

Concluding the Adventure

If the heroes failed to defeat Rasmus, the vampire eventually brings the people of Dead Haven under his control. As his power grows, Rasmus begins to set his sights on conquering neighboring lands. He creates an elite squad of undead to hunt down and assassinate high-profile followers of Pelor and the Raven Queen (which might include the characters, if they survived).

If the heroes used Arne's blood to once again bind the vampire's spirit, Rasmus is no longer a concern for the foreseeable future, and the people of Dead Haven can start trying to put their lives back together. The characters earn the grudging thanks of the sheriff, who is not eager to deal with the undead as neighbors, and the respect and admiration of the Ironhearts, who volunteer to help the party's future endeavors (though Ilse gives up the adventuring life to tend to her new fief). The existence of so large a population of undead living peacefully draws the ire of Orcus, and though his cultists will need time to recover from the blow the characters have dealt, when they do, they will seek the party out.

If the heroes used Brother Jerom's ritual to banish Rasmus and destroy the population of Dead Haven, they earn the appreciation of the sheriff as well as the admiration of the Raven Queen's followers, who are likely to consider the characters to be natural allies. The heroes might have inadvertently drawn the attention of other cults or necromancers operating nearby, and although Rasmus cannot return to the mortal realm, he can still send agents there to harry

the characters. Even better, his agents might lure the heroes to the Shadowfell, where the vampire can avenge himself against them.

Finally, if the heroes brought Arne's blood back to Confidence, the tiefling uses it to cast his ritual, which—to everyone's amazement—works exactly as he had hoped. The Ironhearts and the people of Arnesbloom pledge the characters their undying gratitude and support, and Sheriff Grimbol is well satisfied with their work. Rasmus eventually rises again, but without a ready population of undead to enslave, he no longer constitutes a regional threat, and he is not eager to face the characters again after being so badly beaten. Instead, the vampire nurses his wounds and begins searching for another way to reclaim his lost power to take revenge on the heroes.

About the Author

Jeffrey Ludwig's pale skin, bloodshot eyes, and habit of staying up at night only to sleep when the sun rises all point to his being a vampire—either that, or a moonlighting writer. Thankfully, his wife and children tolerate him regardless. This is his third contribution to *Dungeon* magazine.

The Dawn of Night

A D&D® adventure for 4-6 1st-level drow characters

By Shawn Merwin

Illustrations by Jason Juta, Francis Tsai, Wayne Reynolds, Eva Widermann, Scott Altmann, Tomás Giorello, and Chris Seaman

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

In preparation for a war against the surface world, a drow priestess leads a strike team in a raid on a small temple dedicated to the sun god, Amaunator, sometimes also known by his old name, Lathander. The treachery of the drow knows no bounds, however, even against one another.

"The Dawn of Night" is a Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for four to six players. This adventure uses pregenerated 1st-level characters whose backgrounds link directly to its story. The character sheets can be downloaded from the Dungeon 218 table of contents page, and the character backgrounds start at the end of the adventure.

The adventure was designed as a prelude to the *Council of Spiders*™ D&D Encounters™ season, which kicked off in August of 2012. It is also a companion to the adventure "The Sun Never Rises" (*Dungeon* 216) insofar as it tells the same story but from the drow point-of-view.

Adventure Background

Lolth's plan to take Mystra's place as the goddess of magic has shaken the foundation of drow society. The duplicitous drow, hungry for power even in the most stable of times, are clambering over one another to gain status in what they anticipate will be Lolth's new realm.

Currently, House Baenre has the distinction of being the most powerful house in Menzoberranzan, the most significant and infamous drow city of the North. Led by the priestesses who dictate Lolth's will to the drow, House Baenre's position has become precarious since Lolth revealed her scheme to become the goddess of magic. By emphasizing the importance of arcane magic, Lolth's plan has given unprecedented power to male wizards, who have until recently been treated as second-class citizens in drow society. Some of these male arcanists have created an organization, called the Council of Spiders, dedicated to earning male wizards a place on Menzoberranzan's Ruling Council, and the priestesses have been debating how to advance Lolth's agenda while keeping the mages' power in check.

Meanwhile, in the settlement of Dagger Falls in Daggerdale, a priestess of Amaunator has received vague, yet disturbing, visions of an impending drow incursion. Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr has also been granted a divine blessing: instructions for creating a magic item that should prove useful in a war against the drow. She has dispatched adventurers to retrieve several rare rubies—the components she needs to make the holy symbol Amaunator revealed to her in her dreams, and she awaits their return.

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Drow spies have learned Dareen has designs on a powerful holy symbol, but they mistakenly believe she already has it. Worried about the item's ability, the leaders of Menzoberranzan have ordered a strike team to travel to Daggerdale, infiltrate the temple, steal the item, and kill or capture all witnesses, including Her Radiance.

With this important mission in the offing, and subtle shifts of power ever present in their thoughts, the leading families have handpicked members for the strike team's advance guard. Glory—or excruciating torture—awaits the representatives upon their return.

Adventure Synopsis

After briefing the adventurers on the upcoming strike, Mistress Silhouette sends them into an area drow once controlled beneath the Temple of Lathander's Light. In the first chamber, the characters trip a demonic trap.

After dealing with the trap, the adventurers must cross a water-filled passage to continue their mission. An ixitxachitl priest waits in the water, where a portal exists between the passage and Demogorgon's realm. By turning off the portal and defeating the ixitxachitl, the adventurers liberate a drow priestess's trapped spirit.

Next, the adventurers must reactivate a vandalized shrine to Lolth, offering their own life force to do so. The repaired shrine provides Mistress Silhouette with the power she needs to summon an elemental. She then orders the creature to tunnel into the cellar of the Temple of Lathander's Light.

In the cellar, Amaunator sends guardians to stop the adventurers from entering the temple. Sun magic infuses the cellar, weakening the characters and temporarily incapacitating Mistress Silhouette. At this time, adventurers who seek the priestess's demise have an opportunity to kill her.

When the path is clear, the rest of the drow strike force surges into the cellar and attacks the temple.

Running the Adventure

When the players are ready to begin, spread the pregenerated character sheets on the table. If four players are at your table, use Zarra, Drisdhaun, Syndrina, and Chali. If you have five players, add Ryltar. If you have six players, add Belgos. **Only after the players have chosen their characters should you hand out the adventurer background sheets at the end of this adventure.** Each sheet describes an adventurer's history, personality, goals, and impressions of the other characters. Thus, they should be kept private. The background sheets are designed to help players jump into roleplaying and add depth to the story.

In this adventure, two plots unfold simultaneously. The main plot has the adventurers infiltrate the area beneath the temple. This is the mission all the adventurers want to complete. A subtler plot involving secret goals and contradictory orders is playing out as well. This means you must be ready to juggle the players' navigation of both plots.

Adjusting the Difficulty

If you are running this adventure for new or casual players, or for fewer than six players, you might want to decrease its difficulty. If your players are experienced and crave a greater challenge, you might want to make it more strenuous.

To adjust the adventure's difficulty, add or subtract monsters and increase or decrease monster hit points. The latter tactic can be used on the fly, allowing monsters to fall early or temporarily survive a killing blow.

You can also alter how players learn important information. For example, inexperienced players might not realize skills can be used to deal with traps or magical effects, so announce that their characters know how to deal with those elements.

Area 1: To lower the difficulty, decrease the trap's hit points or increase the amount of damage a successful skill check does. Do not increase the difficulty in this area.

Area 2: To decrease the difficulty, increase the number of rounds between the arrivals of new ixitxachitl demon rays. Also, allow adventurers to deactivate the rune from a distance rather than requiring them to stand on the rune. Increase the difficulty only if you have six experienced players. To increase the difficulty, start the encounter with one ixitxachitl demon ray in the water with the ixitxachitl priest.

Area 3: To decrease the difficulty, give hints to players who are having trouble figuring out the altar puzzle and reduce the penalty for wrong guesses from 5 to 2, or eliminate the penalty altogether.

Area 5: To decrease the difficulty, allow the columns to be deactivated from a distance or let a successful check deactivate more than one. Do not increase the difficulty in this area.

Staging Area

The characters gather at the Underdark staging area.

Light: Bright light (lanterns).

When you're ready to start, read:

You are all drow selected for a strike force on a mission to raid the Temple of Lathander's Light, holy place of the sun deity Amaunator. Although none of you know the true aim of the mission, you're sure it has one. Drow society encourages conflict to weed out the weak. So, no doubt, some among you have their own purposes here, perhaps even running counter to the overall mission goals.

You arrive in the cavern where the strike force is amassing. About a dozen other drow, an equal number of dwarf mercenaries, and several enormous spiders wait for the assault to begin. The soldiers mill about. Like you, most of the drow long for the chance to prove their skill and dedication to their goddess, Lolth, the Spider Queen. The mercenaries likely want little more than to earn their coin with minimal effort.

A male drow wearing snug, fitted leather armor and symbols of Lolth approaches you. As he does, you notice he wears house Baenre's emblem and you realize he is Dep'Pezzt Baenre, a noted warrior and Chali's cousin.

Dep'Pezzt says, "Mistress Silhouette awaits. Follow me." He leads you to a female drow who is dressed as a priestess of Lolth. Her haughty stare takes you in.

"You have been chosen to act as the strike team's advance guard," she says in a cold, commanding voice. "Don't indulge your pride over this honor. You have much to prove, including your skill in battle and your dedication to our majestic Spider Queen. Tell me, what skills do you have that make you worthy of doing Lolth's work?"

Encourage each player to introduce his or her character, describing physical traits and laying the groundwork for later roleplaying.

Conflict Consensus: At this point, to get the possibilities out in the open and add tension, tell the players that individual goals might lead to conflict and even combat among the characters. Take a survey to get a consensus on what the players are comfortable with insofar as such conflict. Lay some consensual ground rules for the limits of such conflicts so everyone is comfortable with the potential for unfriendly character interactions. Stick to the agreed preferences for intraparty conflict.

When introductions are concluded, continue:

Mistress Silhouette grimaces at you, as if already judging you unworthy. Then she points to a pair of rope ladders ascending into the darkness of a vertical shaft. "These ladders lead to an area we abandoned centuries ago. Start by securing it.

"Your second task is to locate a dormant shrine to Lolth. Our scholars believe this shrine can be reactivated. We plan to use it to create a tunnel into the pathetic temple's cellar. After you secure the cellar, the strike force will surge into the temple. You needn't join us there.

"I will be watching your progress through divination magic. When you have secured the area and activated the shrine of Lolth, I shall come to take command."

Use the following to answer questions the players have.

- **What is the mission's goal?** "A female half-elf leads the Temple of Lathander's Light. This priestess holds great power and must be captured alive, if possible, or slain before the invasion of the surface world can commence." (Silhouette does not mention the holy symbol that is the mission's goal. Such knowledge might be too valuable or enticing for some drow, especially any linked with the Council of Spiders.)
- **How do we reactivate the shrine to Lolth?** Mistress Silhouette looks at you disdainfully and replies, "Anyone who has the proper dedication to the Spider Queen will know how to honor her in a way that reestablishes the shrine."
- **What do we know about this area?**
  History DC 19: The area you are about to infiltrate used to belong to the drow. Centuries ago, a demonic force hostile to Lolth invaded, driving out the drow. Few who survived the attack are still alive.
- **Who is Mistress Silhouette?**
  Streetwise DC 12: (Chali gains a +4 bonus to this check.) Silhouette is an up-and-coming force in the ranks of House Baenre. The priestess has the reputation for sacrificing her underlings' lives when doing so increases her chance of succeeding.

Area 1: Entry Chamber

Trap Encounter Level 1

This chamber lies at the top of a vertical shaft. After demonic creatures drove the drow from this area, they set up this trap as a barrier against future drow incursions.

Light: None, or dim when the *demonic wall* appears.

Trap: *Demonic wall* (see below).

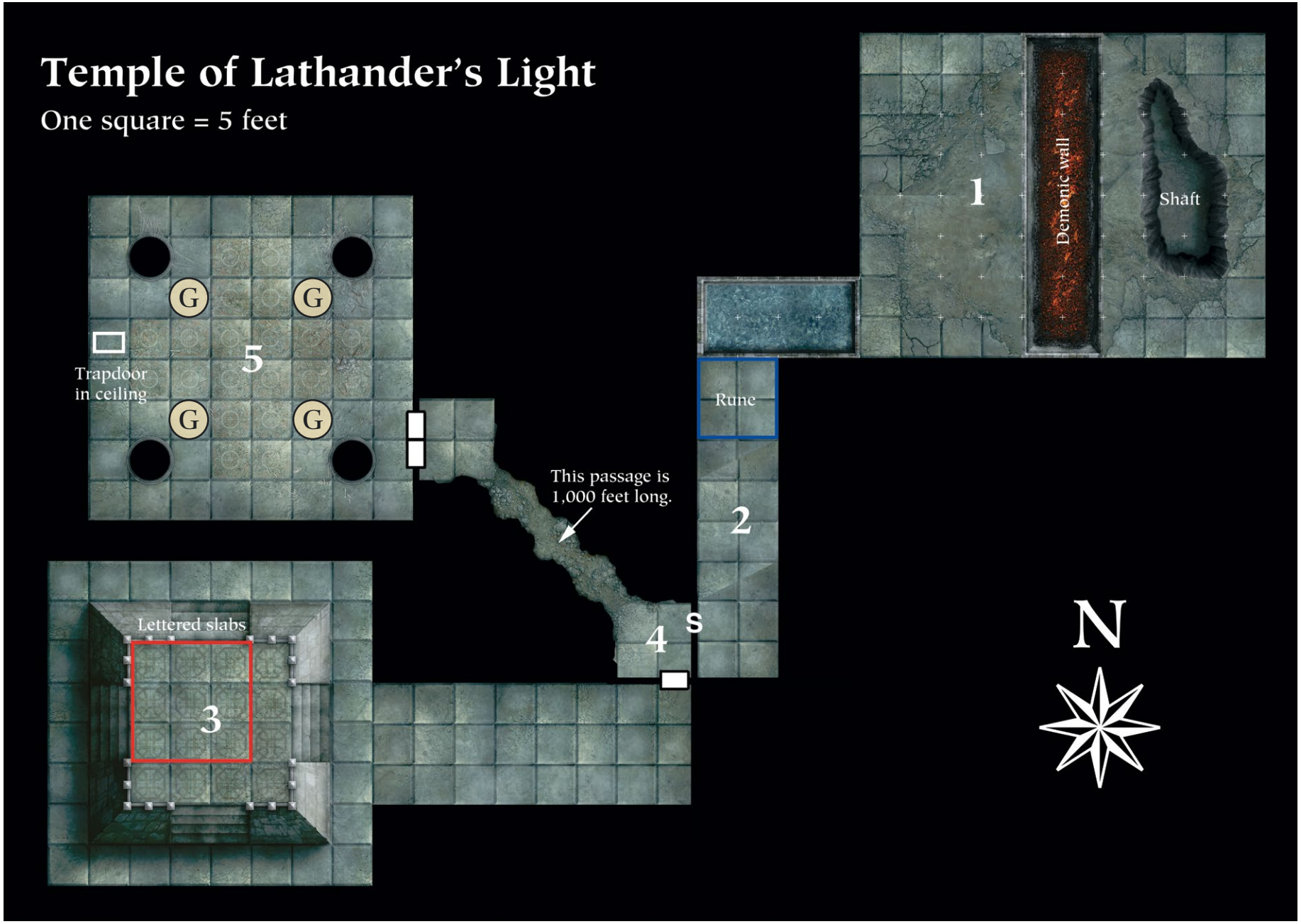
When the characters enter the room, read:

Your climb up into a room strewn with the dust and detritus. A water-filled hallway leading out from the room's western wall is the only other exit you see.

Perception DC 21: A character who enters a square adjacent to the *demonic wall* trap (see below) can feel its presence.

Trap: Any creature entering a square marked in red on the map triggers the trap. Attacking or using skill checks against the *demonic wall* also triggers the trap.

The adventurers cannot pass through the room without triggering the trap. If they fail to perceive it, they trigger the trap when they blunder into it. This gives the trap a surprise round. If the characters do


Temple of Lathander's Light
One square = 5 feet
1
Demonic wall
Shaft
Rune
2
5
G
G
G
G
Trapdoor
in ceiling
This passage is
1,000 feet long.
4
S
Lettered slabs
3
N

perceive the trap, they still cannot pass without first attacking or disabling it; an attack from the *demonic wall* is inevitable.

When the trap is triggered, read:
A glowing red wall appears, cutting you off from the room's western end. From within the wall, tortured humanoid faces wail in agony. Many have drow features.

Arcana or Religion DC 13: The character senses the trap's countermeasures.

Demonic Wall	**Level 3 Elite Trap**
Object	XP 300
Detect Perception DC 21	**Initiative** +4
HP 85	
AC 13, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 11, **Will** –	
Immune cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Traits	
Impenetrable	
A creature can enter the trap's area but cannot pass through it to the chamber's other side.	
Standard Actions	
Freezing Ray (cold) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
Demonic Grasp (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature in the trap's area); +6 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d4 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Arcana or Religion DC 13. *Requirement:* The character making the check must be in the trap's area. *Success:* The trap takes 20 damage and cannot use *demonic grasp* until the end of its next turn. *Failure (8 or lower):* The character becomes the target of *freezing ray*, which the trap uses as a free action.	
✦ **Influence:** Diplomacy, Bluff, or Intimidate DC 13; this countermeasure works like "Disable" above, but the character appeals to the drow spirits trapped in the wall. Success means those spirits rebel, and damage the wall.	

Area 2: New Masters

Combat Encounter Level 1+

A water-filled pit houses a portal that connects to Demogorgon's realm in the Abyss. The demon lord's followers were responsible for displacing the drow centuries ago. An ixitxachitl priest arrives in the pool when the trap in area 1 is triggered.

Light: None.

Monsters: 1 ixitxachitl priest, 1+ ixitxachitl demon rays.

When the characters approach the area, read:
The passage ahead houses a pool filled with dark water. A hallway on the other side of the pool stretches south. You can see a portion of a 10-foot-diameter arcane rune etched into the hallway's stone floor just beyond the pool.

Arcana or Religion DC 13: The rune on the floor south of the pool is infused with magic that draws upon an evil power, and it isn't Lolth's.

Perception DC 20: The character sees ripples in the water, which had moments ago been still.

When an adventurer enters the 10-foot-square section of hall south of the pool, the rune glows a sickly purple, and an ixitxachitl priest surfaces and attacks. The priest has surprise if none of the adventurers succeeded on the Perception check. It can start in any square in the pool. After the initial summons, stepping on the symbol does not call more priests.

At the start of the second round, the rune glows bright red, and a demon ray arrives in the pool and attacks immediately. At the start of every even-numbered round thereafter, another demon ray appears until the adventurers deactivate the rune.

Pool: While the portal is active, the water is bottomless. When the connection is severed, the portal disappears and the pool is 20 feet deep and difficult terrain for nonaquatic creatures.

Rune: The rune once enabled drow to summon water elementals, but the demons who drove off the drow corrupted it. The demonic influence on the rune can be removed. A creature standing in a rune square may attempt a DC 13 Nature check or Religion check as a standard action to stop any more demon rays from appearing. A second successful check returns the pool to its original state and removes all demonic influence from the rune. (The pool cannot be used to summon any water elementals at this time.) After two successful checks to remove the portal, the ghost of a drow appears, as described below.

Tactics: Even though the ixitxachitls prefer fighting in water, they can still fly to attack the adventurers on land. The demon rays try to stay within 2 squares of the priest to take advantage of its aura. While the portal between the pool and its home is intact, the ixitxachitl priest's *vampiric fangs* automatically recharges each round.

Ghost Drow

During the attack on the drow centuries ago, a priestess stood between the demon horde and her people, trying to buy time for their escape. She was pulled into the pool, where her body swiftly died and decayed. But her soul was not so lucky. It has remained alone, trapped in the darkness.

If the adventurers remove the demonic influence from the rune, read:
Mist rises from the water, swirling until it coalesces into the ghostly image of a drow priestess.

She stares at the ceiling and whispers, "Lolth be praised; she has found me, she who yearns, no me who yearns, no thee who yearns for the warmth of webs, of wrappings, of silken ropes to hold her, no me, no she to the queen's bosom. They escaped, my people, her people, thee's people?"

The drow races at you, poking misty fingers through your flesh. "Who are you?"

Give the adventurers a chance to talk with this long-dead priestess.

When the character who made the final skill check to remove the portal speaks up, read:
The ghost looks at you with wide, wild eyes and replies, "Let she, no her, no me honor you, my, no her drow offspring. Your blood sings of warm death. It makes she thirsty."

The priestess closes her eyes, flings her arms wide, and flies into you. Cold leaks from your skin as your senses sharpen painfully. You might even be able to hear the thoughts of those around you. In moments, you warm again and the pain drains away. The ghost is nowhere to be seen.

Ixitxachitl Demon Ray **Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (aquatic, demon) XP 150

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22 **Initiative** +7
AC 17, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +3
Speed 0, fly 5 (hover), swim 8 Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The demon ray can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Circle the Prey
Slowed creatures cannot make opportunity attacks against the demon ray.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.

⸸ **Tail Barbs** (poison) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage plus 1d6 poison damage, and the target is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +9, Stealth +10
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal

Ixitxachitl Priest **Level 5 Controller (Leader)**
Medium elemental magical beast (aquatic, demon) XP 200

HP 66; **Bloodied** 33 **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17 **Perception** +6
Speed 0, fly 5 (hover), swim 8 Darkvision

Traits

☼ **Demogorgon's Blessing** ✦ **Aura** 2
Allies within the aura gain a +5 bonus to damage rolls.

Aquatic
The ixitxachitl priest can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the ixitxachitl's priest's next turn.

⸸ **Vampiric Fangs** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one dazed creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: The target loses a healing surge and is weakened until the end of its next turn.

Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +10, Athletics +9
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 19 (+6)
Con 18 (+6) **Int** 17 (+5) **Cha** 14 (+4)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal

The player of the adventurer who receives this benefit can look at another player's character background sheet for 45 seconds. Two *potions of healing* also appear in the character's closed hand.

At the corridor's southern end, the adventurers find a would-be secret door that is plainly visible from this side. The secret door opens into a 10-by-10-square chamber that houses another door, this one in its southern wall. (The tunnel in the southwest corner of the room is not yet there. See "Area 4: Creating the Tunnel" for information on its creation.)

Area 3: Spider Altar

Exploration Encounter

To activate the altar to Lolth, the adventurers must repair the shrine and sacrifice some of their life force.

Light: None.

When the characters enter the area, read:
A raised platform sits at the end of a wide hallway, which is heavily draped in dense webs. More spiderwebs hang over the 10-foot-high altar and lace across a stairway leading to its top. A smattering of aged bones and stone slabs decorate the floor in front of the platform. Thick webs obscure the edges of the room.

At one time, this raised platform acted as an altar to Lolth, where sacrifices were made in the Spider Queen's honor. When the demons loyal to Demogorgon invaded, they desecrated the altar.

Reactivating the Altar

Each 5-foot square of the platform is either missing a lettered slab or contains a rune slab. The rune slabs fill the seven squares on the east and south edges of the altar, and they are clearly mystic rather than linguistically significant. The nine lettered slabs that are meant to fill the rest of the platform in a 3-by-3-square area have been pried up and scattered throughout the room. The map shows this area outlined in a red box.

To activate the altar, the adventurers need to replace the lettered slabs in the correct order. You can describe the nine slabs that fit into the nine spaces on the top of the platform. Tell the players the slabs contain the following letters:

H	**H**	**L**
L	**L**	**I**
O	**A**	**T**

Each time a slab is placed in the wrong spot, each adventurer takes 3 damage. If the slabs are arranged so the letters spell out "HAIL LOLTH" in any orientation, the whole altar glows with a violet light and begins to hum faintly.

When the altar is reactivated, read:
A syrupy voice within your mind says, "You have done well, but I require more." Each of you understands you must sacrifice life force to Lolth to reignite the shrine's power. She demands it.

The party must give up one healing surge per player.

Another's Sacrifice: If the players are having a good time roleplaying, those who wish to do so can make checks against one another to force the losing character to pay the winner's sacrifice. For example, Zarra could make a Religion check to attempt to force Drisdhaun to give up an additional surge so Zarra wouldn't have to. Drisdhaun could oppose that check with an Arcana check in an attempt to block or reverse the effect. The highest check result wins the contest, and a character who beats another by 5 or more can force the other to give up two surges. Other skills that might be used include Endurance (bodily fortitude to resist the loss) or Diplomacy (convince Lolth to take another character's surge).

After the healing surges are sacrificed, read:
Nearby webs quiver as spiders spontaneously appear within them, and the altar becomes warm to the touch.

"Your sacrifice is noted," the voice in your head says. "Go forth and do my will."

Area 4: Creating the Tunnel

Exploration Encounter

After the altar in area 3 has been reactivated, Mistress Silhouette comes up to create the tunnel to the temple's cellar.

Light: None.

Read:
Mistress Silhouette arrives soon after you reactivate the altar. She stares greedily at the glowing shrine and says, "The rest of the force is barely able to control its enthusiasm to do Lolth's bidding. We must work quickly. The power of the shrine allows me to call forth elementals to dig a tunnel into the temple's cellar. Enter the cellar and make sure it is safe for the rest of the team. Then you may rest as the main force completes the mission."

Mistress Silhouette prays for a moment. Then she returns to the room that held the secret door, leaving a trail of purple sparks in her wake. She begins to chant, and the room shudders. A stone-skinned humanoid emerges and stares at Mistress Silhouette. She commands the elemental into action, and the purple sparks surrounding the priestess splutter out as the creature burrows into the stone, pushing forward and upward. The tunnel it creates is barely wide enough for you to move through it upright.

Mistress Silhouette looks ashen as she squares her shoulders, glares at you, and points toward the tunnel.

Area 5: Temple Cellar

Combat Encounter Level 3

Consecrated columns flare with divine light when the characters enter, and divine guardians show up to defend the temple.

Light: Dark, or intensely bright once the pillars are activated (see "Columns of Lathander" below).

Monsters: 1 dwarf sunpriest, 4 dwarf clan guards + 1 clan guard per character in the party more than four.

When the characters enter the area, read:
At the end of the newly formed tunnel is a small empty room. It once might have served as a storage area or cell. A set of double doors is built into its western wall. The elemental is gone.

The doors are unlocked, and all is silent.

When the adventurers open the doors, read:
Vermin tracks on the dust-covered floor are the only signs of disturbance in this silent chamber. Four pillars bearing a holy visage support the ceiling. Sun imagery and ancient inscriptions are carved into the room's surfaces.

A wooden ladder lies on the floor near the western wall. A trapdoor is set into the 10-foot-high ceiling above where the ladder is resting.

When the ladder is disturbed or a pillar is touched, Amaunator's power ricochets through the cellar.

Read:
The pillars blaze with blinding golden light. From out of the light step dwarves whose eyes shine with holy anger.

One dwarf glows brighter than the rest. In a voice that echoes with a supernatural quality, he says, "We do not abide your kind. You must die for your trespass."

Religion DC 12: The power infusing the room is channeled through the pillars from Amaunator (also known as Lathander), the sun god and foe of all creatures of darkness. The right combination of prayer, arcane manipulation, and physical manipulation can deactivate the pillars.

Tactics: The dwarves are special servants Amaunator sent to do his bidding. Four dwarf clan guards are indicated on the map, and they should be placed

as close to these positions as possible. The sunpriest and the fifth clan guard can be placed at your discretion, preferably far away from the characters.

The clan guards use their marking powers to keep the adventurers away from the sunpriest. They also attempt to push their opponents into the pillars' dazing area (see "Columns of Lathander").

The sunpriest uses its ranged attack as often as possible, healing a clan guard when necessary.

4+ Dwarf Clan Guards (G) **Level 1 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 100

HP 33; **Bloodied** 16 **Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 5 Low-light vision

Traits

Stand the Ground
The dwarf can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Steady-Footed
The dwarf can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

Standard Actions

Warhammer (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, and the dwarf can push the target 1 square. The dwarf can then shift 1 square to a square the target vacated.
Effect: The dwarf marks the target until the end of the dwarf's next turn.

Throwing Hammer (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the dwarf marks the target until the end of the dwarf's next turn.

Double Hammer Strike (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Effect: The dwarf uses *warhammer* and then uses *throwing hammer*. The dwarf does not provoke opportunity attacks for this use of *throwing hammer*.

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 17 (+3)
Con 17 (+3) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Dwarven
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, warhammer, 4 throwing hammers

Shadowdale Drow Totemist **Level 3 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid XP 150

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23 **Initiative** +2
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 6 Darkvision

Traits

Dark Pact Mobility ✦ **Aura** 5
Bloodied allies in the aura automatically succeed on saving throws against slowing effects and immobilizing effects.

Standard Actions

Totem Bite (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Venom Ray (implement, poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d12 + 5 poison damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Minor Actions

Spider Swarm (poison, zone) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚃
Effect: Close burst 2. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the totemist uses *spider swarm* again. Enemies grant combat advantage while in the zone, and any enemy that ends its turn there takes 5 poison damage.

Skills Arcana +10, Intimidate +9
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 12 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+4)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment robes, spider totem

Dwarf Sunpriest **Level 5 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 200

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +3
AC 18, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 18 **Perception** +11
Speed 5 Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects

Traits

Stand the Ground
Whenever the sunpriest is pulled, pushed, or slid, it can move 1 square less than the effect specifies.

Steady-Footed
The sunpriest can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

Standard Actions

Burning Mace (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 fire damage.

Bright Ray (implement, radiant) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +10 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + 8 radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the start of the sunpriest's next turn.

Sun Blessing (fire, healing) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: One ally within 5 squares of the sunpriest regains 10 hit points. Until the end of the sunpriest's next turn, that ally deals 5 extra fire damage with its melee attacks, and any enemy that hits that ally with a melee attack takes 5 fire damage.

Skills Dungeoneering +11, Endurance +11, Religion +9
Str 13 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 18 (+6)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 15 (+4) **Cha** 15 (+4)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Dwarven
Equipment hide armor, mace, totem

CHAOS IN THE FINAL BATTLE

Most of the character background sheets indicate that completing the mission is a priority. That said, players can be as unpredictable as drow. Fighting among party members could overshadow the task at hand.

If the players seem content with the infighting, let it happen. If anyone is uncomfortable with how the game is unfolding, though, explain that in games with evil characters, and with drow in particular, situations such as this can occur.

If an in-game resolution is needed, Lolth intervenes. Tired of infighting that hampers drow in the service to her, she makes her anger known in a flash of violet light. Any character fighting against another drow is weakened. If the character does not cease hostilities by the end of his or her next turn, the character is stunned until the end of the encounter.

Columns of Lathander

These columns fill the room with energy anathema to drow and anyone loyal to Lolth. Drow suffer the following adverse effects when the pillars flare to life.

- Drow grant combat advantage to attackers while on the map.
- The entire map is difficult terrain for drow.
- Neither *darkfire* nor *cloud of darkness* works on the map or 10 squares down the tunnel.

A pillar can be deactivated by using Arcana or Religion to suppress the magic, or by using Athletics, Dungeoneering, or Thievery to crack the pillar. An adventurer can attempt the check (DC 19 as a minor action or DC 12 as a standard action) only while adjacent to the column he or she intends to deactivate.

If a check fails by 5 or more, the adventurer takes 5 radiant damage and is dazed until the end of his or her next turn. If a check is successful, one adverse effect from the columns, in order, ends.

When the last dwarf guardian dies, any active pillars automatically go dormant.

Mistress Silhouette

At the start of the second round, Mistress Silhouette enters the room as if to join the battle. The pillar's anti-Lolth magic overwhelms her in her weakened state, and she falls prone and helpless. The adventurers who wish her dead have this chance to end her life.

Use your discretion for judging how the adventurers might target her without making it obvious. Stealth checks and Bluff checks to disguise true intentions are the most obvious. Allow other checks as applicable.

After all the columns of Lathander are deactivated, Mistress Silhouette recovers from her helpless condition if she is still alive.

Conclusion

If the adventurers defeat the holy dwarf guards, they have succeeded in their mission.

If Silhouette survives the battle in the cellar, she leads the rest of the strike force through the trapdoor into the Temple of Lathander's Light. If Mistress Silhouette dies, her assistant Dep'Pezzt steps into her position.

Either way, the battle goes well for the drow and their dwarf allies. Many surface dwellers are taken prisoner, including Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr. The drow find no trace of the holy symbol. Instead, they find six rare rubies (components in the ritual Dareen intends to perform to create the symbol). Each character can take one ruby (250 gp). When a character takes one, it turns from red to purple.

Most of the strike team returns to the Underdark. The remaining drow and dwarves stand guard in the rooms beneath the temple as Mistress Silhouette questions Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr.

About the Author

Shawn Merwin is a technical writer and freelance game designer whose work for Wizards of the Coast includes *Dungeon Delve*™, *Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress*™, and *Halls of Undermountain*™, as well as two seasons of *D&D Encounters*™: *War of Everlasting Darkness*™ and *Against the Cult of Chaos*™. He has been an administrator in many Wizards of the Coast's organized-play campaigns, and his thoughts on RPGs and game design are featured in his "Know Your Roll" column at Critical-Hits.com or on Twitter at @shawnmerwin.

Zarra, Female Drow Cleric

You are from Menzoberranzan, the most formidable drow city in the Underdark. The city, and its drow culture, are built on a strict hierarchy of powerful family houses whose members worship the goddess Lolth, the Spider Queen. Underneath that order, however, is a bubbling chaos that continuously spills over into backstabbing, assassinations, and open warfare between houses.

Adding to this complicated social and political maelstrom is the role of gender in your society. Obedience to Lolth is paramount, and the Spider Queen speaks primarily through her priestesses, all of whom are female. Wielding this divine power, the priestesses dominate drow society. Arcane magic is the bailiwick of male drow. Such wizards are as powerful as the priestesses in might, if not in political clout.

As the first daughter of a priestess of House Faen Tlabbar, sired by a powerful male of your house, no one has ever doubted your power. In a war against a lesser house of Menzoberranzan, an assassin's bolt nearly ended your life. The scar on your neck, which your subordinates tell you only adds to your beauty, acts as a constant reminder that your superiority over others marks you as a target.

Your fellow priestesses have been agitated lately. Lolth's plan to become the goddess of magic requires arcane power, too. Some priestesses fear the male wizards are going to gain enough power in the new order to threaten the priestesses' stranglehold on drow society.

Your house leaders have ordered you to join the strike team Mistress Silhouette Baenre, a priestess of Lolth, is leading. You have been told little about the operation, but that is about to change as the time for the mission arrives.

Personality

As a priestess of Lolth, you command the respect and admiration of other drow. And you deserve every ounce of deference you receive. After all, you are more beautiful, cunning, ambitious, and dedicated to Lolth than almost all other Underdark dwellers.

Even though your superiority is obviously responsible for your past and future successes, you must never forget that none of it would be possible without Lolth. Your devotion to your goddess must be absolute and unwavering. And you must remind those around you of the debt they owe her.

Goals

You are conflicted. The priestesses of your house understand the importance of this mission, but they fear its successful completion might give more power to the wizards of the Council of Spiders, who seek representation on the Ruling Council of Menzoberranzan. That group's rise could lead to a decline in your house's fortunes.

The best way to subtly sabotage the raid would be to ensure its leader, Mistress Silhouette, does not survive the operation. Her death would also mean the elimination of a rising figure in another house.

The Others

Drisdhaun: He is a drow wizard. The wizards are surely going to make a play for power in this new era of Lolth's rule. You must keep a close eye on him, because he undoubtedly has a secret agenda on this mission. Find out his agenda and oppose it.

Syndrina: Her reputation as a fierce warrior and intensely loyal subject of Lolth precedes her. She is someone you can count on for protection during this operation.

Chali: This spy for House Baenre has a reputation for bloodthirstiness. She is one of House Baenre's most skilled thieves. As long as you keep her in front of you, all should be well.

Ryltar: This is not your first meeting with the warrior from House Armgo. Years ago, talk of a union between your houses fell through. During the discussion, you were paired with Ryltar as a potential couple. His physical deformity—a missing eye—was at first exotic. But he was boring and unable to keep up with you in the ways that matter. You were happy the union dissolved.

Belgos: This ranger is a member of a mercenary group called Bregan D'aerthe. Its mercenaries sell their loyalty to the highest bidder. Still, coin is more steadfast than the honor of many drow.

Drisdhaun, Male Drow Wizard

You are from Menzoberranzan, the most formidable drow city in the Underdark. The city, and its drow culture, are built on a strict hierarchy of powerful family houses whose members worship the goddess Lolth, the Spider Queen. Underneath that order, however, is a bubbling chaos that continuously spills over into backstabbing, assassinations, and open warfare between houses.

Adding to this complicated social and political maelstrom is the role of gender in your society. Obedience to Lolth is paramount, and the Spider Queen speaks primarily through her priestesses, all of whom are female. Wielding this divine power, the priestesses dominate drow society. Arcane magic is the bailiwick of male drow. Such wizards are as powerful as the priestesses in might, if not in political clout.

Your relationships with your fellow House Xorlarrin drow have been rocky for as long as you can remember. Despite your obvious arcane talents, you have had trouble accepting your place. Of course, had you not shown an affinity for the arcane arts, you would have been sacrificed as a child. You've had a problem accepting your second-class status in Menzoberranzan. Recently, though, some news has cheered you. Lolth is focusing on gaining arcane might to pair with her divine power. In response, some of Menzoberranzan's male wizards have formed the Council of Spiders. You are a member of that group, and you and your fellows hope to gain enough leverage to break the hold the priestesses have had on drow society for millennia by adding wizards to the Ruling Council that governs the city.

When your house put together teams to seek entrance into the legendary ruins of Gauntlgrym, you were overlooked—probably a deliberate slight because of your past rebellious actions. Now another critical mission against the surface is planned, and you were one of the few competent wizards left at your house's disposal. So even though this mission is supposed to be a great honor, it feels rather hollow to you. You have been told little about what the strike team is planning to do. But your house leaders and your superiors in the Council of Spiders have explicitly ordered you to do as Mistress Silhouette Baenre, the priestess who is commanding the operation, tells you.

Personality

After having regularly suffered the company of fools who are less skilled and intelligent than you, you do not have the patience to deal with incompetence. Your experiences have made you gruff, argumentative, and independent to a fault.

Goals

You were slipped secret information that the real goal of this strike against the surface world is the recovery of a magic item, so it is important this operation succeeds. The priestesses obviously want the item for their own use, but the Council of Spiders desperately wants it as well.

Mistress Silhouette represents two conflicting interests for you. House Baenre is a political ally of your house, but Silhouette is a priestess. If she somehow perished during the mission, your standing in Menzoberranzan would increase. If you saved Mistress Silhouette from another's treachery, though, she might be in your debt.

The Others

Zarra: Zarra is a priestess, whose power you oppose. She is a member of House Faen Tlabbar, whose family you oppose. Be wary of her. You can bet she is wary of you.

Syndrina: You have little use for zealots, and this paladin is the epitome of fanaticism. If her shield is all that stands between you and your enemies, her attitude is at least temporarily acceptable.

Chali: You have heard a rumor that a blood-crazed female assassin from House Baenre is responsible for killing a mentor of yours whose opposition to the priestesses became public. Chali fits such a description.

Ryltar: You don't know much about him, but this one-eyed drow warrior keeps leveling his odd gaze at you. It is a bit disconcerting.

Belgos: A fellow male, this ranger obviously has no love for Lolth or her laws. He is a potential ally if anything goes wrong during the mission.

Syndrina, Female Drow Paladin

You are from Menzoberranzan, the most formidable drow city in the Underdark. The city, and its drow culture, are built on a strict hierarchy of powerful family houses whose members worship the goddess Lolth, the Spider Queen. Underneath that order, however, is a bubbling chaos that continuously spills over into backstabbing, assassinations, and open warfare between houses.

Adding to this complicated social and political maelstrom is the role of gender in your society. Obedience to Lolth is paramount, and the Spider Queen speaks primarily through her priestesses, all of whom are female. Wielding this divine power, the priestesses dominate drow society. Arcane magic is the bailiwick of male drow. Such wizards are as powerful as the priestesses in might, if not in political clout.

As a member of House Melarn, you know nothing is as important as dedication and subservience to Lolth. Even among the zealous, you are a paragon. In your youth, the priestesses claimed you as one of their own because the touch of Lolth is strong in you. The powers of a priestess did not come easily to you, though. Your strength and personal magnetism were being wasted.

When it seemed your house might exile you, something amazing happened. You foiled an assassin's attack against a high-ranking priestess in your house, using your longsword and the divine powers Lolth obviously provided. As a result, House Melarn has put to good use your unique combination of skill-at-arms and divine fortitude.

You know little about what the strike team is planning to do, but you have instructions from your house leaders to do as Mistress Silhouette Baenre, the priestess who is commanding the mission, tells you.

Personality

You are obedient, merciless, and fearless—all in a creepy way. Most drow hate your house, so you must be better than everyone else.

Goals

Lolth inspired the leaders of your house to send you on this mission; therefore, nothing is more important than its successful completion.

For too many years, the drow have failed Lolth, their constant infighting and backstabbing stealing their focus. It is past time for that to stop. The first drow on this operation to do harm to another drow is going to taste the full force of your wrath.

The Others

Zarra: House Melarn seeks an alliance with House Faen Tlabbar, so you intend to be nice to Zarra. After all, she is a Lolth-chosen priestess. That's good enough for you.

Drisdhaun: This male wizard has the stink of treachery. These wizards use any excuse to seize power from the priestesses, the rightful rulers of drow civilization. You will not let that happen.

Chali: This one does not fight with the same honor you do. But given her reputation and unusual abilities, it is clear Lolth has claimed her. As long as she keeps her weapons pointing in the right direction, you are pleased to fight alongside her.

Ryltar: This warrior belongs to House Barrison Del'Armgo, a militaristic house that holds a position in Menzoberranzan your house would prefer to fill. If he fights with honor and serves Lolth with distinction, you will count him as an ally. If he proves to be less than capable or honorable, his death would not sadden you.

Belgos: This ranger is a member of the mercenary group Bregan D'aerthe. Everyone knows its fighters are nothing more than honorless sellswords. Worse yet, you know Belgos spent time among the surface dwellers, and their beliefs have no doubt tainted him.

Chali, Female Drow Rogue

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House Baenre, your house, has been the most powerful house in Menzoberranzan for as long as you can remember. Remaining at the head of the Ruling Council requires more than dedicated priestesses, knowledgeable wizards, and capable warriors. The treachery and deviousness inherent in Menzoberranzan politics make rogues such as you indispensable. Spying on foes and allies alike provides invaluable information, and quietly knifing an enemy in the back is pretty standard work for you.

Although you know how to talk the talk regarding Lolth, you don't put much stock in religion. If it came down to a choice between the Spider Queen's blessing and a well-balanced knife, you'd take the blade any day. That said, your house is the strongest because of Lolth, so you keep your blasphemy to yourself.

You know little about what the strike team is planning to do, but your house leaders have told you to do as Mistress Silhouette Baenre, the priestess of Lolth who is commanding the mission, tells you.

Personality

House Baenre's elite assassins have trained you and, more importantly, claimed you as one of them. Your masters have taken great pains to remind you—again—to kill only those whom they tell you to eliminate. Others in your house say you talk too much and take too much pleasure in your duties. But you enjoy your work, and you're good at it.

Goals

A powerful priestess from your house has learned Mistress Silhouette is planning an assassination to move up in the house's ranks. This priestess wants you to make sure Mistress Silhouette does not return from the mission. The deed should be done in secret, since it would look bad if the operation failed because of a house squabble.

The Others

Zarra: This priestess might not show it, but her demeanor tells you she is a kindred spirit. Something about witnessing (or, better yet, causing) the death of another is pleasing to her.

Drisdhaun: You killed one of this wizard's mentors when priestesses from your house learned of the male's duplicitous plans. Although it would not be wise to tell Drisdhaun about your involvement, he would surely thank you for your efforts since his mentor's death moved him up in his house's ranks.

Syndrina: Assassins from your house attacked a member of this knight's house, and she foiled the plot. That couldn't have been an easy task. She must be strong, so she's a worthy ally and one to watch.

Ryltar: A one-eyed drow sporting facial hair is a rare sight. No wonder he looks so grumpy. You wonder how having only one eye affects his fighting ability.

Belgos: One of your hobbies is learning about the surface world, and rumor has it this ranger has lived among the surface dwellers for many years. He must have great stories to tell.

Ryltar, Male Drow Fighter

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House Barrison Del'Armgo has risen to become the second most powerful house in Menzoberranzan, taking a different path than most. Other houses generally rise and fall on the fortunes of their priestesses, but your house has relied on military strength and the wiles of its wizards.

Your prominence in House Barrison Del'Armgo is unusual. Born with only one eye—a defective creature—you should have been killed as a babe. Your father, however, secreted you away and oversaw your martial training. He instilled in you the understanding that you would have to be twice as good as your rivals to be seen as comparable to them. Your martial skills have earned you respect, and being selected to take part in this mission is a testament to your house's faith in your ability.

You know little about what the strike team is planning to do, but your house leaders have told you to do as Mistress Silhouette Baenre, the priestess of Lolth who is commanding the mission, tells you.

Personality

You are hot-tempered, sarcastic, and egotistical. If someone tells a story, you have a tale about doing the same thing better, smarter, and faster.

Members of your house often have facial hair, leading to rumors you are not pure-blooded drow. You hope someone insinuates such a thing to your face.

Goals

It is only a matter of time before House Barrison Del'Armgo surpasses House Baenre as the most powerful house in Menzoberranzan. Lolth's new focus on seeking sources of arcane magic hurts Baenre and favors you.

The leader of this expedition, Mistress Silhouette Baenre, represents two enemies to you: House Baenre and the cabal of ruling priestesses. If she somehow perished during the mission, your standing in Menzoberranzan would increase dramatically. Yet, it is vital that this operation succeeds.

The Others

Zarra: This is not your first meeting with this priestess from House Faen Tlabbar. Years ago, talk of a union between your houses fell through. During the discussion, you were paired with Zarra as a potential couple. Her depravity was at first amusing but quickly became disturbing. You are glad the alliance fell through.

Drisdhaun: This wizard's house, Xorlarrin, and yours have an uneasy truce, but you have learned the staff Drisdhaun uses is a war spoil taken from a murdered member of your house. This does not mean Drisdhaun or his house was involved, but it might be good to get the staff back.

Syndrina: This holy warrior represents a conundrum for you. She comes from the tainted drow of House Melarn, who are completely untrustworthy. Yet she carries herself with a devotion to Lolth that borders on the insane.

Chali: A member of House Baenre, Chali is probably tasked with ensuring Mistress Silhouette stays safe. Her weaponry marks her as an assassin, so it would be wise to keep your distance from her.

Belgos: This ranger is too quiet, and he watches people too closely. Although Belgos works as a Bregan D'aerthe mercenary, he obviously has a private agenda. You can't trust a mercenary whose loyalty is only to coin. A sellsword who has a secret is even more dangerous.

Belgos, Male Drow Ranger

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Some drow, born into houses with little power in Menzoberranzan or whose houses are destroyed in political conflicts, must make their fortunes through other means. Those who can prove their skills with weapons often become soldiers in the mercenary band known as Bregan D'aerthe. You are one such person.

When House Baenre wiped out your house, you escaped to the surface world. You spent time there acting as a hunter and guide. Even though the topside races never truly trusted or accepted you, a few surface dwellers did come to respect you.

A chance meeting with a handful of drow on an expedition put you back in contact with your people. The group was part of Bregan D'aerthe, and its members recognized your expertise. They asked you to join them and return to Menzoberranzan, the drow capital city.

Since that time, you have become a valued member of the mercenary band. When this current opportunity presented itself, you were instructed to join the strike team.

You know little about what the strike team is planning to do, but Bregan D'aerthe's leaders have told you to do as Mistress Silhouette Baenre, the priestess of Lolth who is commanding the mission, tells you.

Personality

An observant and cool-headed survivor, you know your place in drow society. Your wisdom and rationality have saved your skin on countless occasions—although others might call it cowardice. You can live with the label, as long as it keeps you alive.

Goals

Bregan D'aerthe is paying you to see the mission through, so you plan to do everything in your power to complete the task. These insane drow—with their crazed worship of a demon, house rivalries, and convoluted politics—are none of your concern. And if worse comes to worst, you can flee back to the surface world. No drow is likely to find you there.

The Others

Zarra: One of the joys of surface-world living is the absence of the tyrannically watchful priestesses. Zarra acts as though she owns each and every one of you. You would be wise to stay on her good side. Or, better yet, stay far away from her.

Drisdhaun: According to rumor, some wizards are preparing to challenge the priestesses for control of Menzoberranzan. You would not be surprised if this one has treachery planned. You definitely don't want to get caught up in any of his plots.

Syndrina: You don't like the zealous glint in this warrior's eyes. You like even less that her fervent gaze is spending a lot of time focused on you.

Chali: This female drow is obviously a spy and probably an assassin, but you can't imagine how someone who makes a living by stealth could talk so much. Maybe she's so good at killing that it makes up for the chatter.

Ryltar: This big, one-eyed warrior is an anomaly in drow society. You are astonished that someone with such an imperfection not only survived but thrived in a militaristic drow house.

COMING NEXT MONTH

BLADES OF THE STYGIAN MASQUE

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